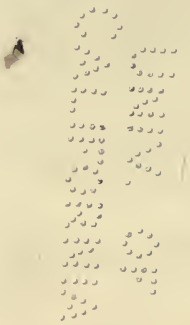
Berkeley
LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/chinesenightsent00fielrich



THE TEACHER EXPOUNDED A CLASSIC AT EVENTIDE UNDER A TREE.

Frontispiece.

CHINESE NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENT

FORTY STORIES TOLD BY ALMOND-EYED FOLK
ACTORS IN THE ROMANCE OF

THE STRAYED ARROW

BY

ADELE M. FIELDE

ILLUSTRATED BY CHINESE ARTISTS

"SPOKEN WORDS VANISH: WRITTEN WORDS ENDURE"
Chinese Proverb

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK
27 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

LONDON
24 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND

The Knickerbocker Press

GR 335
F 5

CARPENTIER

COPYRIGHT, 1893, BY
ADELE M. FIELDE
Entered at Stationers' Hall, London
BY ADELE M. FIELDE

Electrotyped, Printed and Bound by
The Knickerbocker Press, New York
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

TO

MY BELOVED FRIENDS
WOMEN OF FAR CATHAY
MY OLDEN COMPANIONS IN SERIOUS WORK
AND IN NEEDED RECREATION

832814

PREFACE.

THESE tales have been heard or overheard by the writer, as they were told in the Swatow vernacular, by persons who could not read. They and their kind have furnished mental entertainment for her during many nights when travelling in a slow native boat, or sitting in a dim native hut, with almond-eyed women and children, in the eastern corner of the Kwangtung province, in Southern China. She is not aware that any of these stories have before been rendered into a European tongue. They have been selected from among many, not less interesting, but less intelligible to those who are unfamiliar with the beliefs and customs of The Middle Kingdom.

The romance of The Strayed Arrow, on which the other forty stories are strung, as beads on a thread, runs through the volume to an Oriental climax.

The illustrations were prepared, under the direction of the author, by native artists in the school of the celebrated painter, Go Leng, at Swatow.

A. M. F.

New York, 1893.

FORTY FOLK-STORIES

	PAGE
The Five Queer Brothers	5
The Three Talismans	9
The Origin of Ants	18
The Mistake of the Apes	27
The Moon-Cake	29
The Fool of the Family	31
He Tried to be Like His Brother-in-Law	33
A Dreadful Boar	37
The Two Melons	41
The Blind Boy's Fall	44
The Fairy Serpent	45
What the Birds Said	51
The Man in a Shell	57
The Young Head of the Family	60
Prospect and Retrospect	71
A Foreordained Match	75
Marrying a Simpleton	80
Baling with a Sieve	87
The Widow and the Sagacious Magistrate	92
A Lawyer as a Debtor	102
The Singing Prisoner	106
Self-Convicted	107
The Ladle that Fell from the Moon	111
A Wife's Vengeance	115
Stolen Garlic	123
Two Frugal Men	129
The Most Frugal of Men	132

PAGE.

Misapplied Wit 136
Similar Diseases 141
A Dream Inspired 146
A Fortuitous Application 147
Jean Valjean in Cathay 154
A Polite Idiosyncrasy 159
Verified Predictions 163
The Three Sworn Brothers 168
The Peasant-Girl's Prisoner 171
Crabs in Plenty 177
False Economy 181
The Thriftless Wife 185
A Wife with two Husbands 188

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

The Teacher Expounded a Classic at Eventide under a Tree . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Archery Practice 3

Eight Genii 11

A Shoe-Shop 19

An Apothecary's Shop 25

A Barber Shaving the Head 35

The Mender of Tubs 47

Musicians 55

A Young Girl Came from the Fields, Riding on a Water-Buffalo 63

A Mandarin in His Sedan-Chair 69

A Go-Between Comes with a Proposal of Marriage . 77

Before the Magistrate 93

Ploughing 103

Women at a Shrine 109

The Lotus-Pool 119

A Flower-Show 125

The Bridge 137

Consulting a Soothsayer 143

A Beggar and His Blind Wife 149

A Wheeled Chair 155

A Blind Fortune-Teller 165

Peasant-Girl and Student 173

Father and Father-in-Law 179

A Man Returns from Abroad 183

Worshipping at the Grave of an Ancestor . . 191

THE STRAYED ARROW.

IN the village of Grand Spur, there lived a poor couple, who had no children save one daughter, named Pearl. This little maid troubled her doting parents by begging that she might learn to read. They found great difficulty in satisfying her desire. They were themselves incompetent to teach her, and none of their neighbors were more learned; they could not afford to hire a tutor for her, and there was no school in the village; it was not customary to instruct girls in letters, and girls never associated with boys. But after much thought, under her entreaties, they solved the problem by dressing her in boys' clothes, finding lodging for her with her maternal grandmother, in a neighboring town, and sending her to the private class of a learned master. There, as a boy, she daily pursued her studies with boys of her own age, winning praise from her teacher by diligence in learning, and gaining the admiration of her classmates by skill in athletic sports, particularly in handling the bow. She always sat at a desk with a studious, generous boy, named Golden Branch, who was her chief companion in work and play, and who became the unwitting possessor of her heart.

The special plague of the two friends was a rude, sly boy, called Grouse, who often interrupted them in study hours, and sometimes spoiled their sport in playtime.

They three, with a dozen other boys, went to the schoolroom before daylight, and conned their lessons silently, so as not to waken their teacher, who slept in an adjoining room. At dawn, the eldest pupil knocked at the teacher's door, and invited him to hear recitations. When the teacher was ready, each pupil in turn came and stood with his back to the teacher and his face to the wall, and repeated from memory a portion of the classics, after which his forenoon lesson was twice read to him by the teacher. Then the boys all went home to breakfast, eating boiled rice and salt fish from a bowl, with a pair of chopsticks held in the right hand. After breakfast the boys returned to school, swept and dusted the room, washed the teacher's dishes, and then read, all aloud and each at his own task, till he was called to recite again. Writing followed, and while the younger boys sat at their desks tracing letters, with brushes, on translucent brown paper, the teacher explained to the older pupils the portions of the classics that they had that morning committed to memory. When the sun neared the meridian, the teacher wrote upon a slip of red paper the subject upon which each boy was to compose a couplet, and pasted the paper on the wall beside the door. This closed the forenoon session, and the boys went to their noonday meal of rice, stewed meats, and minced vegetables, and worked or played awhile, meditating upon the subject prescribed. It might be an admonition, such as "Go out with awe, come in with fear"; "To a parent be perfectly obedient, to the sovereign be completely loyal"; or it might be a proverb, such as "A polished up speech, and a corrected manuscript, are not nearly so neat as the first form"; or "Tell a stranger only three tenths of what you know"; or it might be a passage from an ancient writer, such as "In hewing an axe-handle, the pattern is not far off"; or "A bad year cannot prove the cause of death to him whose stores

ARCHERY PRACTICE.

of grain are large"; or it might be any terse saying, sanctified by antiquity. On returning to the school-room, in the middle of the afternoon, the boys wrote out the couplets they had composed, and took them, one by one, to the teacher for comment and correction. They then read aloud till the sun was low, when they went to their suppers of rice and boiled vegetables, sauntered with their friends in the twilight, and slept before the curfew gun sounded from the city wall. The older boys sometimes returned to the court, where the teacher expounded a classic at eventide under a tree, and they often spent the evening together in the school-room, sitting around a lamp of pea-nut oil, with a wick of bulrush pith, studying, sipping tea, eating cakes, or telling stories. Their teacher frequently joined them, and one evening, excusing himself for repeating a story that had no moral, he told them about

THE FIVE QUEER BROTHERS.

An old woman had five grown-up sons that looked just alike. The eldest could gulp up the ocean at a mouthful; the second was hard enough to nick steel; the third had extensible legs; the fourth was unaffected by fire; the fifth lived without breathing. They all concealed their peculiar traits, and their neighbors did not know they were queer.

The eldest supported the family by fishing, going alone to the sea, and bringing back loads of spoil. The neighbors often besought him to teach their sons how to fish, and he at last let all their boys go

with him, one day, to learn his art. On reaching the shore, he sucked the sea into his mouth, and directed the boys to the dry bottom, to collect the fish. When he was tired of holding the water, he beckoned to the boys to return, but they were playing amongst strange objects, and paid no heed to him. When he could contain the sea no longer, he had to let it flow back into its former basin, and all the boys were drowned. As he went homeward, he passed the doors of the parents, who inquired how many fish their sons had caught, and how long they would be in coming back. He told them the facts, yet they would not excuse him, and they dragged him before the magistrate to account for the loss of their children. He defended himself by saying that he had not invited the boys to go with him, and had consented to their going only when the parents had repeatedly urged him ; that, after the boys were on the ocean-bed, he had done his utmost to induce them to come ashore ; that he had held the water as long as he could, and had then put it in the sea-basin solely because nothing else would contain it. Notwithstanding this defence, the judge decided that, since he took the boys away and did not bring them back, he was guilty of murder, and sentenced him to decapitation. He entreated leave to pay, before his

execution, one visit to his aged mother, and this was granted. He went alone and told his brothers of his doom, and the second brother returned in his stead to the judge, thanked him for having given him permission to perform a duty required by filial piety, and said he was then ready to die. He knelt with bowed head, and the headsman brought the knife down across the back of his neck, but the knife was nicked and the neck was left unscathed. A second knife, and a third of finer steel, were brought and tried by headsmen who were accustomed to sever heads clean off at one stroke. Having spoiled their best blades without marring his neck, they took him back to prison and informed the judge that the sentence could not be executed.

The judge then decreed that he should be dropped into the sea which covered his victims. When he heard this decision, he said that he took leave of his mother supposing that his head was to be cut off, and that, if he was to be drowned, he must go to her and make known his fate, and get her blessing anew. Permission being given, he went and told his brothers what had happened, and the third brother took the place of the second, and presented himself before the judge as the criminal that was to be sunk in the sea. He was carried far from shore and thrown over-

board, but he stretched his legs till his feet touched bottom, and he stood with his head in the air. They hauled him aboard and took him farther from land, but still his extensible legs supported him above the waters. Then they sailed to mid-ocean, and cast him into its greatest depths, but his legs still lengthened so that he was not drowned. They brought him back to the judge, reported what had been done, and said that some other method of destroying him must be followed.

He was then condemned to death by being boiled in oil; and while the caldron was being heated, he begged and obtained leave to go and tell his mother of his late survival, and of the manner in which he was soon to be taken off. His brothers having heard the latest judgment, the fourth one went to bear the penalty of the law, and was lowered into the kettle of boiling oil, where he disported himself as if in a tepid bath, and even asked the executioners to stir up the fire a little to increase the warmth. Finding that he could not be fried, he was remanded to prison.

Then the populace, the bereaved parents, and the magistrate joined in effort to invent a sure method of putting him to death. Water, fire, and sword all having failed, they finally fixed upon smothering him in a vast cream-cake. The whole country round made contributions of flour for the tough pastry,

sugar for the viscid filling, and bricks for a huge oven; and it was made and baked on a plain outside the city walls. Meanwhile the prisoner was allowed to go and bid his mother farewell, and the fifth brother secretly became his substitute. When the cake was done, a multitude of people, with oxen, horses, and ropes, dragged it to the execution ground, and within it the culprit was interred. As he was able to exist without air, he rested peacefully till the next midnight. Then he safely crawled forth, and returned to his home, where he dwelt happily for many years with his remarkable brothers.

The boys were so pleased with this tale that Grouse begged the teacher to tell another, without a moral, and he consented to do so the following evening, on condition that they would each tell one in turn. They all agreed to this, and the next nightfall, the tea being infused and set smoking in the middle of the square red table, with the tiny, saucerless cups well rinsed and ready to receive it, the boys drew up the benches and sat near the teacher's straight-backed arm-chair, and he told them the story of

THE THREE TALISMANS.

THERE was once a pious rich man, who spent his time and used his wealth in worship of the gods. As he gave his mind to methods of obeisance, and his money to the purchase of obla-

tions, he, in the course of years, became poor, and was obliged to consider how he should support his wife and his three young sons. When he found that he could get no lucrative employment near home, he sold all his property except his house, and embarked in a trading expedition to a distant country. On the voyage his junk was wrecked, his goods were lost, and he was cast destitute upon an island that had but few inhabitants. From these he begged food and raiment, but no one showed compassion on him except an apparent outcast, who gave him a hat, a cloak, and a basket, telling him that the hat, when held before his breast, would render him invisible; the cloak, extended by his arms, would enable him to fly over water; and the basket, when tapped by his fingers, would fill with gems. He took the gifts, and found that they had the virtues described. The hat permitted him to partake unseen of the best cheer in any house; the cloak carried him across seas; and the basket furnished him with means of supplying all his other needs.

On reaching home, he learned that his wife had died during his long absence. His three sons had grown tall, wise, and comely, and the fond father secretly used his three talismans for their benefit, so that they soon had vast wealth in land, houses, and

EIGHT GENII.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

coin. After several years, when he knew that he was about to die from old age, he called his sons to his bedside, and gave to each a talisman. To the eldest he gave the cloak, to the second the hat, and to the youngest and best beloved he gave the basket. To each son he pointed out the dangers incurred by a misuse of his possession, and upon the youngest, especially, he urged the necessity for labor and frugality, as a means of developing a correct character. The young man listened respectfully to his father's exhortation, and declared that, while he would carefully heed it, he would also, by means of his basket, win a princess in marriage.

After the old man's funeral, the youngest son went away to the capital, sought out the portion of the palace occupied by the emperor's beautiful daughter, secured the attention of a handmaiden, and sent word to the princess that he had gems of extraordinary size and beauty which he wished to lay before her eyes. The maid gave such a glowing account of the jewels that the princess sent her out to bring them to her, and was so pleased on beholding them that she kept them all, with the basket that held them, and returned to the owner a sum of money which she thought a sufficient compensation for them. As there was no witness to the transaction,

the young man asked in vain for the return of his basket, and was finally obliged to go away without it, to avoid being arrested as a disturber of the imperial peace. His means of living being gone, he begged his way over the long road homeward, told his brothers what had happened, and besought them to lend him the hat and cloak, that he might go back and recover his lost treasure. After making many objections against lending their goods to one who had proved incapable of keeping his own, they yielded to his arguments, and entrusted to him their talismans, and he went again to the capital. There he haunted the doors of the palace, awaiting opportunity to steal in and find his basket; but he was discovered at a moment when he had his hat on his head instead of before his breast, and being recognized as the man who had formerly been troublesome, he was seized, stripped, beaten, and driven beyond the gates. Bruised, despairing, and ashamed to return to his brothers, he wandered off to the deep glens of the mountains. There he became famished, and looked about for something to satisfy his hunger. He perceived two clumps of banana trees, with two bunches of fruit, the one bunch yellow and ripe, the other bunch green and shrivelled. He at once plucked and ate a ripe banana, but he

had no sooner done so than his head began to ache, and, on putting up his hand, he felt a horn growing from his forehead. The horn grew fast, curled among the trees, and fastened him tightly to the spot. The horror of the situation was extreme, but did not prevent his becoming hungry again; so when he could no longer endure starvation, he plucked and ate another ripe banana, with the same consequence. He then had a pair of long crooked horns, that he could neither break off nor tear from his skull. Fearing to eat more of fruit which produced such excrescences, he suffered hunger as long as he could while fruit was within reach, and then he plucked and ate one of the green bananas. No sooner had he done this than one horn began to dwindle, and then disappeared. He then ate another green banana, and the other horn also disappeared. Having recovered his natural condition, he bethought himself that, by making use of fruit having such qualities, he might perhaps regain his lost goods. He thereupon took two of each sort, returned to the palace disguised as an aged traveller, and caused the princess to be informed that he had come from genii-land with a peculiar fruit which would give perpetual youth to whomsoever ate it. The princess sent her handmaid to negotiate for the

fruit, and the handmaid, thinking it would be well for her to remain young along with her mistress, bought the two yellow bananas, one of which she concealed in her sleeve, while she carried the other to the princess. The princess lost no time in devouring the fruit, and, while she was thus engaged, the handmaiden swallowed hers on the way down stairs. A long horn sprang instantly from the head of the mistress and coiled among the posts of the divan on which she sat. A similar horn issued from the head of the maid and fastened her to the banisters of the stairs she was descending. The screams of the two brought the inmates of the palace about them, and, in the confusion, the vender of the fruit escaped into safe concealment.

The wearers of the horns were in sad plight. The horns were as sensitive as boils and as hard as stones. Renowned surgeons examined them and shrunk from attempting their reduction or excision. When the gods had been appealed to in vain, and when the court-physicians had all failed to give hope of relief, the emperor issued a proclamation, promising his daughter in marriage to any one who would remove the incubus from her head. Some time after the setting forth of this proclamation, the young man, in the guise of a physician, presented himself at the

palace and was admitted to an audience with the emperor. In the conversation which ensued, the beauty, the refined manner, and the wisdom of the young doctor so favorably impressed the emperor that he made no objection to giving suitable vouchers that, if the horns were removed from the head of the afflicted princess and of her handmaiden, the payment therefor should be a legal marriage-contract between the princess and her physician. The young man then administered the green bananas and had the pleasure of seeing the horns disappear from the head of his bride and of her servant. The emperor kept his promise, and the princess soon accompanied her husband to his own home, carrying the basket, the cloak, and the hat, which were in due time transferred to their respective owners. From that time the family prospered, though the talismans gradually decayed.

The teacher, having finished his narration, Grouse remarked that he did not think such talismans were nowadays bestowed, however needfully entreated of the gods; but one would sometimes be greatly benefited by listening to other people's prayers. For instance, a great-uncle of his was one nightfall returning from town by a mountain path that led past the shrine of a local deity, and stopped to rearrange his bundles in a thicket beside the shrine. While there he overheard the response of the god to the petition of a tiger that

had come to ask direction toward good prey. The god told the tiger that in a certain hamlet a plump young woman would at moonrise go out from her dwelling to draw water from a well in her garden, and described the locality minutely that the tiger might not fail to find it. The hearer in the thicket identified in the description his own abode, and so hastened home and kept his wife safely indoors, and out of danger! Golden Branch said he should rely on hard work and prudence for success; though he thought luck had much to do with it, according with the old saying: "When luck goes, gold turns into iron; when luck comes, brass turns into gold."

The teacher then called on the eldest of the boys for a story, and this pupil responded, saying that he had at the noon recess been into a shoe-shop, where a man who was cutting out soles complained that ants infested his leather, and then told about

THE ORIGIN OF ANTS.

A MAN had a wife who berated him because he did not earn enough to support her and her boy. She told him that, if he could not get work near home, he might better go far away and stay there until he could provide for his family. So he went abroad, seeking employment, but he found nothing to do, and was so homesick that he soon returned to his native village. Fearing the taunts of his wife when she should know that he had no money, he lingered outside his house, and there he overheard a con-

A SHOE SHOP.

versation between her and her son, about what she had that morning bought in the market. He heard the cupboard-door open and shut, as she put away the provisions ; and he thought he should much like to dine with his family. After a while he took courage and went in, but the only greeting he received was an inquiry why he had come back so soon. He replied that, while abroad, he had discovered that he had a supernatural sense of smell, and so thought that he would return and exercise his gift among his friends. His wife scoffingly called on him to at once give proof of his smelling powers by telling her what there was to eat in the house. He sniffed the air, and said there was chicken, dressed, but not cooked. She exhibited surprise, and he sniffed again and said there was pork also, somewhere near the chicken. She appeared interested, and he sniffed again, and said there was fish, which he thought must be carp, and two kinds of vegetables at least, and some bean-curd. She was so mollified by this display of a remarkable sense in her husband, that she gave him his dinner affectionately, and then went out to tell her neighbors what a talent he had for smelling things out. Her story spread, and grew apace, until it came to the emperor's ears that in a certain village there was a man who could trace

any missing article by its scent. As it happened, the emperor had just lost a jade seal, and as it was of importance that he should recover it, he sent for this man and told him that if he found the seal he might have any office below the throne. The poor fellow, conscious that he lacked the power ascribed to him, sat down and began to consider how he should escape punishment for imposture. The more he meditated the more he feared, and he soon became so absorbed in his misery that he forgot his surroundings, shut his eyes, and groaned and muttered: "Ah! this is *sharp* distress! This is a *dire* calamity!" The courtiers thought he had fallen into the trance which usually precedes the exercise of superhuman faculties, and they watched and listened, at a little distance, for the outcome. Suddenly he felt his sleeve pulled, and two of the courtiers secretly besought him not to betray them. They promised that if he would not again mention their names, they would lead him to the well in which the seal was hidden, and would give him a present in addition to the reward he would get from the emperor. Following the indications of the two courtiers, who were named Sharp and Dyer, and who supposed his groans had been oracular and referred to them, he went sniffing to the well, and declared the seal to be at the

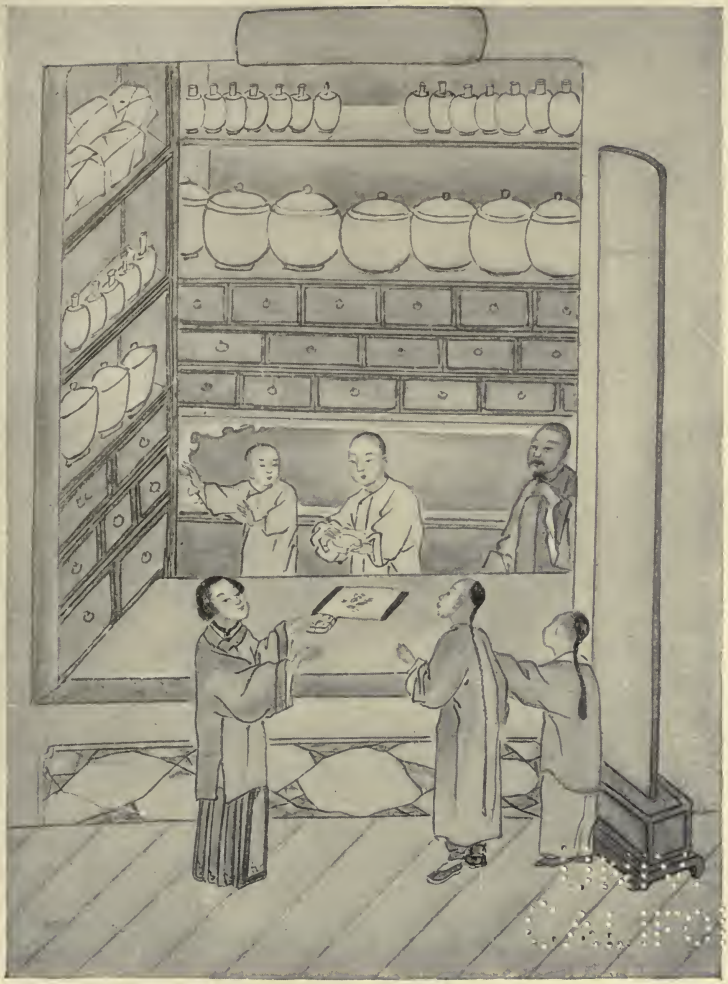
bottom. It was lifted out, and the emperor offered him the promised reward. He declined office, and chose instead a coverlet of toffy which he thought his wife might nibble at o'nights, and be thus diverted from the curtain lectures with which she was wont to disturb his sleep.

The emperor thought his choice a strange one, but had the toffy coverlet made for him, and he took it and went home. His wife awaited him, expecting riches and honors; and when he told her that he had found the seal, and, in lieu of an office, had chosen a toffy coverlet for her, she made his life miserable with recriminations.

Soon after he left the capital, the empress heard how the emperor's seal had been recovered, and, wishing to see for herself an exhibition of such a wonderful sense of smell, she called the man to her palace. She put a kitten, wrapped in raw cotton, into a closed basket, and, calling her household around her, had the man brought in, to divine what the basket contained. He gazed at the basket, and as he could think of no one thing that seemed more likely than another to be hidden there, he persuaded himself that he should soon lose his head. He began to consider whether he could escape by flight; but

the doors were guarded, and there was some one at every step who might seize him. In his terror and despair, thinking only of himself, he exclaimed: "The bagged cat dies." The empress, hearing his utterance, hastened to open the basket, and discovered that the poor kitten was indeed dead, stifled by the cotton in which it had been too closely packed. All the people of the court, having this new proof of his power of smelling, averred that he was a god, and that his proper abode was in the skies. So they all took hold of him, and tossed him into the heavens. He went so high that when he came down he was dashed into dust, and the atoms were scattered everywhere over the earth. The dust all turned into ants, and so it comes to pass that, to this day, whenever any one has anything that is good to eat, the ants discover it from afar, and make their way to it by the sense of smell.

Golden Branch said he would tell a story that he had heard from his uncle, who kept an apothecary-shop, and who had heard the tale in a hamlet at the foot of the hills where he went to buy herbs, tigers' bones, snake-skins, bears' gall, scorpions, and the spiders that were used to make poultices for erysipelas. A man there, a collector of roots, had told his uncle of



AN APOTHECARY'S SHOP.

No Local
Availability

THE MISTAKE OF THE APES.

A THRIFTLESS man, who had a scolding wife, resorted to the woods to hang himself; but after he had tied the noose his courage failed, and he went home. His wife, on seeing him, said he had been gone so long that she had begun to hope he would never come back. This so wounded his feelings that he declared his intention of ending his life, and again betook himself to the forest. There he passed from tree to tree and deferred the act from hour to hour, till he entered a strange gorge, and sat down in the attitude of a musing Buddha under a branch on which he decided to fix his rope.

Being exhausted by fasting and fatigue, he fell into a deep sleep, and was presently discovered by a wandering ape, who reported to his tribe that he had found their ancestor. A council of the elders was then called around the sleeping man, and after due inspection they unanimously decided that he was indeed their ancestor, and should be their king. So they carried him to their stronghold in a wooded glen, enthroned him in an arbor, and surrounded him with offerings of fruits and nuts. When he awoke he found his wants so provided for and his servants so deferential that he thought he might greatly enjoy

life among the apes. They continued to bring as tribute to him the best of their gleanings in the neighborhood and all the treasures they collected in their excursions to distant regions. He saw where they had stowed the valuable articles accumulated during past years, and at his leisure he examined and assorted them.

One day when the apes were away he took all their portable wealth and made his way out of the forest and back to his own door. His wife, seeing him more shabby than ever, poured reproaches upon him, but he silenced her by putting a piece of gold in her hand. Having enough to live comfortably upon for many years, the woman became companionable. She soon told her intimate friend that her husband went away to kill himself and came back rich, and this friend urged her own husband to do likewise. He in turn importuned his lucky neighbor to disclose to him the method by which he got his fortune. Having promised secrecy and a share of the plunder, he was intrusted with the story of election to headship among the apes, and was given direction how to reach their retreat. He then set off, followed the same route, sat in the same attitude under the same tree, and awaited the arrival of the scout who should call the tribe to carry their returned chief into their fastnesses.

The apes had meantime deliberated, and had concluded that a being who had deserted them, taking with him their goods, was neither their sire nor sovereign. So when a young ape foraging for provisions saw this second man under the tree he returned home and notified the tribe, whereupon the apes, moved to indignation and anger, surrounded him in force and tore him in pieces.

Pearl, who was sitting beside Golden Branch, said that reminded her of the saying of Mencius: "It is impossible that any one should become ruler of the empire, to whom it has not yielded the subjection of the heart."

Grouse thought the story exemplified the proverb: "If you gamble and do not lose, it is the neatest work; if you rob and are not killed, it is the business that pays best," and then he went on to tell about

THE MOON-CAKE.

A LITTLE boy had a cake that a big boy coveted. Designing to get the cake without making the little boy cry so loud as to attract his mother's attention, the big boy remarked that the cake would be prettier if it were more like the moon. The little boy thought that a cake like the moon must be desirable, and on being assured by the big boy that he had

made many such, he handed over his cake for manipulation. The big boy took out a mouthful, leaving a crescent with jagged edge. The little boy was not pleased by the change, and began to whimper; whereupon the big boy pacified him by saying that he would make the cake into a half-moon. So he nibbled off the horns of the crescent, and gnawed the edge smooth; but when the half-moon was made, the little boy perceived that there was hardly any cake left, and he again began to snivel. The big boy again diverted him by telling him that, if he did not like so small a moon, he should have one that was just the size of the real orb. He then took the cake and explained that, just before the new moon is seen, the old moon disappears. Then he swallowed the rest of the cake, and ran off, leaving the little boy waiting for the new moon.

It was now the turn of a pupil, whose dress indicated that he had within twenty-seven months been bereaved of a parent. He had a white cord braided into his black cue; a brown sackcloth cover upon his black satin cap; and the seams of his tunic showed the raw edges of the cloth. His shoes were also draped with sackcloth; and as much white as the weather permitted was visible in his outer garments. It is considered good form to smile when speaking of the dead; it is also polite to joke when in second mourning: so the student in white told merrily his tale about

THE FOOL OF THE FAMILY.

A RICH Chinese lady had a foolish son, for whom she had taken a wife from a cultured family. When he was about to pay the first visit to his bride's parents, his mother instructed him how to behave and what to say, for she was very anxious that his mental deficiency should not be discovered. She tried to forecast the questions that would be put to him, and to provide him with answers that would satisfy the questioner, and at the same time forestall further questioning. As he carried a costly fan on which a landscape was painted, she thought that guests, disposed to be affable, would ask what scene was thereon represented, and so she taught him to respond to that question by saying, "Oh, that is only a fancy sketch." Then, as he was to ride a fine mule, she thought the gentlemen would be sure to comment upon its excellent condition, and to inquire its price; so she drilled her son in replying, with courteous humility: "The animal is nothing more than a good beast of burden, reared on our farm, and not worthy of your attention."

When the young man arrived at the door of his host, the first to greet him was his prospective mother-in-law, who politely inquired after the health

of his mother. He promptly responded, saying: "The animal is nothing more than a good beast of burden, reared on our farm, and not worthy of your attention." The horrified mother-in-law drew back, half unconsciously exclaiming: "I was told that yours was a very well ordered family!" The fool, having bethought himself that he ought to have first used the answer which his mother first taught him, hastened to reply: "Oh, that is only a fancy sketch."

"Confucius says 'Rotten wood cannot be carved,'" remarked Golden Branch.

The teacher said it was of no use "trying to reach ten feet with a nine-foot pole," nor for a fool to try to appear to have sense, nor for a woman to pretend to be able to spell. A neighbor of his, named Smith, who had spent some years abroad, returned home, and heard that one of his old classmates, named Brown, was living in his village. He went at once to Brown's house, and knocked at the door. Mrs. Brown inquired who was there, and was told that it was an old friend of her husband's named Smith. She said her husband was absent, but that as soon as he should return she would tell him his friend Smith had been to see him, and she inquired to which family of Smiths the visitor belonged and whether the caller spelled his name with an *i* or with a *y*. Mr. Smith went home and told his wife all about his call, and commented upon the courteous manner of his friend's wife, and the social knowledge displayed by her inquiry whether he spelled his name with an *i* or with a *y*. His wife remarked that if he looked at home he might see as well-bred a woman as was to be found in any man's

house; that she did not perceive, in what he had narrated, evidence of any extraordinary culture, and that, if he were absent when his call should be returned, his classmate would probably go home and comment on *her* intelligence. The next day Mr. Smith was careful to appear to be absent, though he actually stayed within hearing, to see how his wife would receive his friend. A caller soon announced himself, and said he was extremely sorry to have missed meeting Mr. Smith, who had been at his house yesterday, and he had hastened to return the visit. Mrs. Smith said that her husband was not then at home, but that as soon as he should return she would tell him that his friend Brown had been to see him. She was sure her husband would desire to know to which family of Browns he belonged, and inquired whether he spelled his name with an *i* or with a *y*!

A cousin of the teacher's, who chanced to be present, said that there was no telling what a fool or a woman might do. When he was at the barber's that morning, getting his head shaved, he head a story concerning

A FOOL WHO TRIED TO BE LIKE HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW.

A RICH widow had an only son who was a fool. She got for him a pretty young wife from a rich family. When the time came for the bridegroom to pay his first visit to his bride's parents, his mother, anxious that he should not disgrace her by rude manners, gave him special instruction how he was to behave while a guest in his father-in-law's house.

Knowing that an elder sister of the bride had been married to a man of repute, and that this well-bred man would be a fellow-guest with her son, she concluded her iterated instructions by telling her son to keep his eye on his wife's sister's husband, and in all things to do as he did. When the young man returned from his father-in-law's house, his mother asked him if he had remembered her directions and had carefully followed the example of his brother-in-law. "Oh, yes," responded he; "I did exactly as Mr. Blank did in all things but one; I failed to froth at the mouth." The man unconsciously appointed as a pattern had unfortunately fallen down in a fit, and his simple follower had also thrown himself on the floor and imitated his convulsions, successfully rivalling him in all except spume. From this comes the common saying: "Don't try to be just like your brother-in-law."

The teacher then dismissed the boys, saying that they ought all to be asleep, and they went home after agreeing to meet the next evening for story-telling.

The teacher, with his cousin, had been invited to a wedding supper, so the boys had the school-room to themselves, and Golden Branch, after setting parched rice and watermelon seeds upon the table, to accompany the clear tea, began the round of stories with one about

A BARBER SHAVING THE HEAD.

DO NOT
CIRCULATE

A DREADFUL BOAR.

A POOR old woman who lived with her one little granddaughter, in a wood, was out gathering sticks for fuel, and found a green stalk of sugar-cane which she added to her bundle. She presently met an elf in the form of a wild boar, that asked her for the cane, but she declined giving it to him, saying that, at her age, to stoop and to rise again was to earn what she picked up, and that she was going to take the cane home, and let her little granddaughter suck its sap. The boar, angry at her refusal, said that he would, during the coming night, eat her granddaughter instead of the cane, and went off into the wood.

When the old woman reached her cabin she sat down by the door and wailed, for she knew she had no means of defending herself against the boar. While she sat crying, a vender of needles came along and asked her what was the matter. She told him, and he said that all he could do for her was to give her a box of needles. This he did, and went on his way. The old woman stuck the needles thickly over the lower half of her door, on its outer side, and then she went on crying. Just then a man came along with a basket of crabs, heard her lamentations, and stopped to inquire what ailed her. She told him, and

he said he knew no help for her, but he would do the best he could for her by giving her half his crabs. The old woman put the crabs in her water-jar, behind her door, and again sat down and cried. A farmer soon came along from the fields, leading his ox, and he also asked the cause of her distress and heard her sad story. He said he was sorry he could not think of any way of preventing the evil she expected, but that he would leave his ox to stay all night with her, as it might be a sort of company for her in her loneliness. She led the ox into her cabin, tied it to the head of her bedstead, gave it some straw, and then cried again.

A courier, returning on horseback from a neighboring town, next passed her door, and dismounted to inquire what troubled her. Having heard her tale, he said he would leave his horse to stay with her, and make the ox more contented. So she tied the horse to the foot of her bed, and, thinking how surely evil was coming upon her with the night, she burst out crying anew. A boy just then came along with a snapping-turtle that he had caught, and stopped to ask what had happened to her. On learning the cause of her weeping, he said it was of no use to contend against sprites, but that he would give her his snapping-turtle as a proof of his sympathy. She

took the turtle, tied it in front of her bedstead, and continued to cry.

Some men who were carrying millstones then came along, inquired into her trouble, and expressed their compassion by giving her a millstone which they rolled into her backyard. A little later a man arrived carrying hoes and a pickaxe, and asked her why she was crying so hard. She told him her grief, and he said he would gladly help her if he could, but he was only a well-digger, and could do nothing for her other than to dig her a well. She pointed out a place in the middle of her backyard, and he went to work and quickly dug a well.

On his departure the old woman cried again, until a paper-seller came and inquired what was the matter. When she had told him, he gave her a large sheet of white paper, as a token of pity, and she laid it smoothly over the mouth of the well.

Nightfall came; the old woman shut and barred her door, put her granddaughter snugly on the wall-side of the bed, and then lay down beside her, to await the foe.

At midnight the boar came, and threw himself against the door to break it in. The needles wounded him sorely, so that when he had gained an entrance he was heated and thirsty, and went to the water-jar

to drink. When he thrust in his snout the crabs attacked him, clung to his bristles and pinched his ears, till he rolled over and over to disincumber himself. Then in a rage he approached the front of the bed; but the snapping-turtle nipped his tail, and made him retreat under the feet of the horse, who kicked him over to the ox, that tossed him back to the horse, and thus beset he was glad to escape to the back-yard, to take a rest, and to consider the situation. Seeing a clean paper spread upon the ground, he went to lie upon it, and fell into the well. The old woman heard the fall, rushed out, and rolled the mill-stone down on him, and crushed him.

I suppose, said Pearl, that if we give just what we can to the needy, and if all our gifts are wisely used by the recipient, then trouble comes to an end. My notion, said Grouse, is that we give to others chiefly in order to save trouble to ourselves; as did my aunt when she carried her ten ounces of silver to her daughter's husband, a silversmith, who had agreed to make it up into jewelry at a low cost. When she handed the silver to her son-in-law, she said, "Now make this up, and return its weight in jewelry to me, without the least diminution or adulteration." He replied: "Oh! Mother! Mother! A silversmith who should once make up pure silver, without alloying it, or pilfering any, would, after this unprecedented act, certainly lose his wife by death." "Oh, then, never mind," said the old woman; "never mind, steal some of it; by all means, steal some of it."

Pearl said that although there was a saying that "Some persons' fingers bend no way but inwards," and another that "Where there is not food for one meal, there is no chance to pass the best piece to your mother," she believed the most gracious and generous actions were performed by those who were poor, and that sincerity counted for much in the eyes of Heaven. She then put another bulrush pith into the oil-saucer, increasing the light, and told the story of

THE TWO MELONS.

An honest and poor old woman was washing clothes at a pool, when a bird that a hunter had disabled by a shot in the wing, fell down into the water before her. She gently took up the bird, carried it home with her, dressed its wound, and fed it until it was well, when it soared away. Some days later it returned, put before her an oval seed, and departed again. The woman planted the seed in her yard and when it came up she recognized the leaf as that of a melon. She madè a trellis for it, and gradually a fruit formed on it, and grew to great size.

Toward the end of the year, the old dame was unable to pay her debts, and her poverty so weighed upon her that she became ill. Sitting one day at her door, feverish and tired, she saw that the melon was ripe, and looked luscious; so she determined to try its unknown quality. Taking a knife, she severed

the melon from its stalk, and was surprised to hear it chink in her hands. On cutting it in two, she found it full of silver and gold pieces, with which she paid her debts and bought supplies for many days.

Among her neighbors was a busybody who craftily found out how the old woman had so suddenly become rich. Thinking there was no good reason why she should not herself be equally fortunate, she washed clothes at the pool, keeping a sharp lookout for birds until she managed to hit and maim one of a flock that was flitting over the water. She then took the disabled bird home, and treated it with care till its wing healed, and it flew away. Shortly afterward it came back with a seed in its beak, laid it before her, and again took flight. The woman quickly planted the seed, saw it come up and spread its leaves, made a trellis for it, and had the gratification of seeing a melon form on its stalk. In prospect of her future wealth, she ate rich food, bought fine garments, and got so deeply into debt that, before the end of the year, she was harried by duns. But the melon grew apace, and she was delighted to find that, as it ripened, it became of vast size, and that when she shook it there was a great rattling inside. At the end of the year she cut it down, and divided it, expecting it to be a coffer of coins ; but there crawled

out of it two old, lame, hungry beggars, who told her they would remain and eat at her table as long as they lived.

Grouse poured tea for all, and said he thought shrewdness had as much influence as goodness in advancing one's interests. Golden Branch thought it fair to exercise tact in effecting a correct result, as did his father's cousin. He was an old man whose wife was dead, and he lived with his daughter-in-law. The latter was a glutton, and used to privately buy, cook, and eat dainties, that she did not share with her father-in-law. One day the old man chanced to see her buying a large fresh fish, and as the fish did not appear on the table, he knew that she had herself enjoyed it alone. So he wrote a stanza, secreted himself on the roof over the door, and the next morning, when she returned from market and was entering the house, he dropped the paper on the threshold. She saw it flutter down, as from the sky, picked it up, and kept it till some one who could read should come to tell her its contents. Her father-in-law returned at noon, and she handed him the paper, telling him it had fallen from the clouds upon the threshold as she was about to enter the house. He read from it to her:

> "The kind heavens have sent down this letter to say
> That it sees the large fish that you buy every day;
> If you set them not forth for your father-in-law,
> They shall turn into imps and abide in your maw."

The young woman at once brought out the fish, confessed her errors, and thereafter took no more private meals.

Grouse now called on the smallest of the boys for a story, and the lad narrated that of

THE BLIND BOY'S FALL.

A BOY who had been blind from his birth lived with a man who had been blind since his youth. The boy often questioned the man about things he had seen. One day he asked what the sky was like, and was told that it was blue, like indigo. He felt of some indigo, and said to himself, "The sky is mealy."

Another day he asked the same question, and was told that the sky was blue, like his best jacket. His best jacket differed from his worst in being always starched and seldom worn, and he was in the habit of finding it among the others by its smell; so he said to himself, "The sky is musty."

Then he inquired what the sun was like, and was told that it was bright, like brass. He felt of some brass, and said to himself, "The sun is hard and smooth." Inducing the old man to talk further of the sun, he learned that it was like a big, new gong; so he examined a gong, and said to himself, "The sun is round and rattles when it is touched."

Afterwards as he was going along the street he stumbled, and fell into a large pan of old potato-flour that a woman had set out to dry. The pan made a din on the flagging, the flour flew into the air, and the boy shouted: "Help! I have fallen into the firmament. Help!"

"I asked my mother to tell me a story," said the next boy in the circle, "and she repeated one which she said a mender of tubs had related while he was repairing her washtub before the door. A family is like a tub; in order to be one, the parts must all fill their appropriate places and offices. The hoops support the staves, and the staves support the hoops, and if either part fails to do its duty, the whole is scattered. In a household each depends on others for maintenance. I am sure you will say the third daughter was a filial one when I tell you the story of

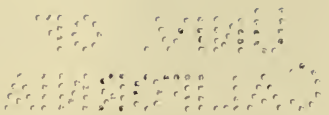
THE FAIRY SERPENT.

Once there was a man who had three daughters, of whom he was devotedly fond. They were skilful in embroidery; and he used every day on his way home from work to gather some flowers for them to use as patterns. One day when he found no flowers along his route homeward he went into the woods to look for wild blossoms, and he unwittingly invaded the domain of a fairy serpent, that coiled around him, held him tightly, and railed at him for having entered his garden. The man excused himself, saying that he came merely to get a few flowers for his daughters, who would be sorely disappointed were he to go home without his usual gift to them. The snake asked him the number, the names, and the ages of his daughters, and then refused to let him go unless he promised

one of them in marriage to him. The poor man tried every argument he could think of to induce the snake to release him upon easier terms, but the reptile would accept no other ransom. At last the father, dreading greater evil to his daughters should they be deprived of his protection, gave the required promise and went home. He could eat no supper, however, for he knew the power of fairies to afflict those who offend them, and he was full of anxiety concerning the misfortunes that must overwhelm his whole family should the compact be disregarded.

Some days passed ; his daughters carefully prepared his meals, and affectionately besought him to eat them, but he would not come to the table. He was always plunged in sorrowful meditation. They conferred among themselves as to the cause of his uncommon behavior, and, having decided that one of them must have displeased him, they agreed to try to find out which one it might be, by going separately, each in turn, to urge him to eat. The eldest went, expressed her distress at his loss of appetite, and urged him to partake of food. He replied that he would do so if she would for his sake marry the snake to whom he had promised a wife. She bluntly refused to carry out her father's contract, and left him in deeper trouble than before.

THE MENDER OF TUBS.



The second daughter then went to beg him to take food, received the same reply, and likewise declined meeting the engagement he had made. The youngest daughter then went and entreated him to eat, heard his story, and at once declared that, if he would care for his own health properly, she would become the bride of the serpent. The father therefore took his meals again, the days sped without bringing calamity, and the welfare of the family for a time seemed secure.

But one morning, as the girls were sitting at their embroidery, a wasp flew into the room and sang :

"Buzz ! I buzz and come the faster ;
Who will wed the snake, my master ?"

Whenever the wasp alighted the girls prodded him with their needles, and followed him up so closely that he had to flee for his life. The next morning two wasps came, singing the same refrain ; the third morning three wasps came ; and the number of wasps increased day by day, until the girls could no longer put them to rout, nor endure their stings.

Then the youngest said that, in order to relieve the family of the buzzing plague, she would go to her uncanny bridegroom. The wasps accompanied her on the road, and guided her into the woods

where the fairy serpent awaited her in a palace that he had built for her reception. There were spacious rooms with carved furniture inlaid with precious stones, chests full of silken fabrics, caskets of jade, and jewels of gold. The snake had beautiful eyes and a musical voice; but his skin was warty, and the girl shuddered at the thought of daily seeing him about.

After the wedding supper, at which the two sat alone, the girl told her spouse that she appreciated the excellence of all that he had provided for her, and that she should perform all her domestic duties exactly. For many days she kept the house neat, cooked the food, and made all things pleasant for her repulsive bridegroom. He doted upon her, and pined whenever she was out of his sight. So heedful was he of her wishes and her welfare, that she grew to like his companionship, and to feel a great lonesomeness whenever he was absent.

Having no help in her household work, she was, one day, on finding the well dried up, obliged to go into the forest in search of water, which she finally discovered and toilsomely brought back from a distant spring. On returning she found the snake dying of thirst, and in her eagerness to save his life she grasped and plunged him into the water, from which he rose transformed, a strong and handsome

man. He had been the subject of wicked enchantment, from which her dutiful quest and gracious pity set him free. Thereafter she often with her admirable husband visited her old home and carried gifts to those who were less happy than she.

"Yes," said Pearl, "there is a wonderful transforming power in sincere affection. 'Inordinate love engenders hatred,' as the old saying goes, but wise and dutiful devotion may change a beast into a man. I wonder if all the beasts that talk are capable of such changes."

"It is said," remarked Golden Branch, "that there are not only animals that can use the language of men, but men who can understand the speech of animals. I heard that there was in olden time one who knew

WHAT THE BIRDS SAID.

A LAD named Kong Hia Chiang, who lived with his parents among the mountains, understood the language of birds. One twilight, as he sat at his books, a flock of birds alighted on a tree before his window and sang :

"Kong Hia Chiang, on the southern plain
A sheep awaits you by a heap of stones,—
A fine fat wether, that the dogs have slain ;
You eat the flesh and we will pick the bones ! "

Kong Hia Chiang went and brought in the torn sheep and cooked it during the night. The next

morning a shepherd came and said that one of his sheep was missing; he had found blood on the meadow, had followed the trail, and it had brought him to that house. Kong Hia Chiang acknowledged that he had brought in the sheep, but declared that the dogs had killed it, and that its death and the place where it might be found had been made known to him by birds. His story was considered to be an impudent fabrication, and he was hauled away to prison.

While he was awaiting his trial before the magistrate, a bird, flying eastward, perched on the wall, saw him, and piped :

> "Foes approach the western border,
> Banners, bows, and spears in order,
> While the gate lacks watch or warder."

Kong Hia Chiang thereupon so vehemently besought his jailer to inform the magistrate of the imminent danger of invasion through the unprotected Western Pass, that the jailer, though wholly incredulous, decided to test his power of comprehending the utterances of birds. He took some rice, soaked a part of it in sweetened water, and a part in brine, and then spread the whole on the roof of a shed into which he brought Kong Hia Chiang, and asked him if he knew why so many birds were chirruping over-

head. Kong Hia Chiang at once replied that those on the roof were hailing those that were flying past, and saying:

"Call a halt; call a halt;
Here is rice fresh and white;
Half is sweet, half is salt;
Stop a bit; take a bite."

The jailer was convinced that he understood the speech of birds, and therefore hastened to the magistrate to report the warning and the test. The magistrate sent a swift courier to notify the military officers, and a scout was sent out to the west. He soon confirmed the message of Kong Hia Chiang, and troops were despatched to strengthen the garrison at the pass. The invaders were thereby successfully repelled. The great service rendered to the country by Kong Hia Chiang was acknowledged by his sovereign, who afterward made use of his remarkable talent, invited him to study with the princes, and eventually raised him to a high rank among the nobles of the empire.

"Speaking of the birds," said Grouse, "leads me to propose going along to the house where the teacher is partaking of the wedding feast, and hearing the music. One of the players has a pipe that suggests a chattering magpie, and another has a horn that sounds like the tooting of an elephant. Then there is a guitar, a banjo, a violin, a clarionet, a flute, and a cithern."

The boys thereupon went homeward, stopping to hear the musicians on their way, and to see a puppet show which amused the crowd around the door of the bridegroom's house.

The next day, Pearl's father, Mr. Summers, came to take her to visit her mother in her native village.

She resumed her female attire, on leaving her grandmother's house, and went in a sedan-chair out of the town, along the narrow paths that bordered the fields of indigo, rice, sugar-cane, and sweet potatoes, past walled hamlets of one-story houses, and came to the foot of the pine-covered hills, where she had, when she was a tiny girl, raked the fallen needles for fuel. The village, with its narrow paved streets, thronged by pigs, fowls, and children, was unchanged. Her mother met her at the low door, whose lintel was covered with charms that might prevent the entrance of evil spirits. Pearl was glad to be with her parents, and she meant to improve her opportunity to ask them not to betroth her without her consent. She was passing out of childhood, and she began to wonder what was to be her destiny in life. She mused on the usual lot of the women of her country, betrothed without their knowledge to men they had never seen, and carried, on a wedding-day appointed by their parents or brothers, into servitude among strangers.

One evening Pearl, sitting with her book in her room, overheard her mother and several women who were sipping tea and enjoying the coolness of the moonlit porch, talking about the troubles of those who had daughters, and the happiness of those who had sons and daughters-in-law. Mrs. Summers remarked that, although her only child was a daughter, she had never, like many women, been urgent in her prayers for sons. She did not worry about posterity, as did the grandmother of

MUSICIANS.

THE MAN IN A SHELL.

A WOMAN, who was anxious to have descendants, went time after time to all the shrines in her neighborhood, to make offerings and pray that her only son's wife might have a child. When she had repeatedly prayed to all the gods within travelling distance from her house, and had given up hope of succor from any of them, she chanced to think of the Sea Dragon King. Though she had never heard of his being appealed to for help in such cases as her own, she meant to leave no resource unexhausted, and so went with suitable offerings to the shore, to entreat the god in the depths of the sea. A water-snake carried word to the Dragon King that a woman was worshipping him on the beach, and a fish was sent to ascertain her wishes. The fish, having overheard her prayers, brought back report that she wanted a grandson. The Sea Dragon laughed and said: "We have no human infants here; we have only shell-fish and polypi. She will have to go elsewhere for what she desires." But the woman came again and again, until the Dragon grew tired of her supplications, and said: "If she is determined to have a grandchild from me, she must take a young conch; that is the best I can give her."

Time passed, and the old woman had expectation of the fulfilment of her wishes. The Sea Dragon's meritorious agency was acknowledged, lauded, and bruited abroad. The child was in due time born, and was found to be encased in a spiral shell, with his head projecting from its mouth. As the family was a wealthy one the queer babe was skilfully cared for, and reared. When he grew older, he would come out of his shell, as does a snail, but would withdraw quickly into it again when tired or frightened. After he attained the size of a man, he would frequently emerge from and sit upon his shell, but would never wholly depart from it. He was well favored, highly educated, and very polite. No secret was made of his peculiar attachment to the shell in which he was born, and which had grown with him. When he became old enough to take a wife, the wealth of the family soon secured for him a pretty young girl as his companion. Soon after the marriage, the grandmother asked the bride whether her husband left his shell at night, or lay in it as hitherto by the side of his couch. The young wife replied that he left his shell on the floor, and lay by her side o' nights. The grandmother then charged the bride to feign sleep, and, when she was sure that her husband slept also, to jump noise-

lessly from the bed, seize the shell, and steal away with it to the grandmother's room. This plan was successfully carried out, and as the bridegroom could neither find his shell nor account for its absence, he lived without it, and appeared like other people.

Some happy years passed, the young wife bore sons, and all was harmonious in the house. But one day the grandmother in the absence of her grandson, put the mouldy shell out to air. The grandson unexpectedly returned, saw, recognized, took possession of his shell, and at once crawled off in it to the sea, from which he never returned.

It is said one may, by urgent appeal to the gods, get a son ; but the son thus gotten may be a sprite or a demon.

One of the guests, who had finished her ninth cup of tea, said that a wise daughter would be as desirable as any son, provided her parents could keep her with them; but no matter how talented or helpful a daughter might be, she must be given to some other household. A Chinese woman was like a hen in a coop ; though she ran ever so fast, she never reached a point from which she could see more than was visible from behind the bars of her prison. The best that could be hoped for, for any girl, was that she might naturally be endowed with such gifts as would give her a commanding position within her husband's house, as was the case with a girl who got the title,

THE YOUNG HEAD OF THE FAMILY.

THERE was once a family consisting of a father, his three sons, and his two daughters-in-law. The two daughters-in-law, wives of the two elder sons, had but recently been brought into the house, and were both from one village a few miles away. Having no mother-in-law living, they had to appeal to their father-in-law whenever they wished to visit their former homes, and as they were lonesome and homesick they perpetually bothered the old man by asking leave of absence.

Vexed by these constant petitions, he set himself to invent a method of putting an end to them, and at last gave them leave in this wise: "You are always begging me to allow you to go and visit your mothers, and thinking that I am very hard-hearted because I do not let you go. Now you may go, but only upon condition that when you come back you will each bring me something I want. The one shall bring me some fire wrapped in paper, and the other some wind in a paper. Unless you promise to bring me these, you are never to ask me to let you go home; and if you go and fail to get these for me, you are never to come back."

The old man did not suppose that these condi-

tions would be accepted, but the girls were young and thoughtless, and in their anxiety to get away did not consider the impossibility of obtaining the articles required. So they made ready with speed, and in great glee started off on foot to visit their mothers. After they had walked a long distance; chatting about what they should do and whom they should see in their native village, the high heel of one of them slipped from under her foot, and she fell down. Owing to this mishap both stopped to adjust the misplaced foot-gear, and while doing this the conditions under which alone they could return to their husbands came to mind, and they began to cry.

While they sat there crying by the roadside a young girl came riding along from the fields on a water-buffalo. She stopped and asked them what was the matter, and whether she could help them. They told her she could do them no good; but she persisted in offering her sympathy and inviting their confidence, till they told her their story, and then she at once said that if they would go home with her she would show them a way out of their trouble. Their case seemed so hopeless to themselves, and the child was so sure of her own power to help them, that they finally accompanied her to her father's house,

where she showed them how to comply with their father-in-law's demand.

For the first a paper lantern only would be needed. When lighted, it would be a fire, and its paper surface would compass the blaze, so that it would truly be "some fire wrapped in paper." For the second, a paper fan would suffice. When flapped, wind would issue from it, and the "wind wrapped in paper" could thus be carried to the old man.

The two young women thanked the wise child, and went on their way rejoicing. After a pleasant visit to their old homes, they took a lantern and a fan, and returned to their father-in-law's house. As soon as he saw them he began to vent his anger at their light regard for his commands, but they assured him that they had perfectly obeyed him, and showed him that what they had brought fulfilled the conditions prescribed. Much astonished, he inquired how it was that they had suddenly become so astute, and they told him the story of their journey, and of the little girl that had so opportunely come to their relief. He inquired whether the little girl was already betrothed, and, finding that she was not, engaged a go-between to see if he could get her for a wife for his youngest son.

Having succeeded in securing the girl as a daugh-

A YOUNG GIRL CAME FROM THE FIELDS, RIDING ON A WATER-BUFFALO.

ter-in-law, he brought her home, and told all the rest of the family that as there was no mother in the house, and as this girl had shown herself to be possessed of extraordinary wisdom, she should be the head of the household.

The wedding festivities being over, the sons of the old man were to return to their usual occupations on the farm ; but, according to their father's order, they came to the young bride for instructions. She told them that they were never to go to or from the fields empty-handed. When they went they must carry fertilizers of some sort for the land, and when they returned they must bring bundles of sticks for fuel. They obeyed, and soon had the land in fine condition, and so much fuel gathered that none need be bought. When there were no more sticks, roots, or weeds to bring, she told them to bring stones instead ; and they soon accumulated an immense pile of stones, which were heaped in a yard near their house.

One day an expert in the discovery of precious stones came along, and saw in this pile a block of jade of great value. In order to get possession of this stone at a small cost he undertook to buy the whole heap, pretending that he wished to use them in building. The little head of the family asked an exorbitant price for them, and as he could not induce

her to take less, he promised to pay her the sum she asked, and to come two days later to bring the money and to remove the stones. That night the girl thought about the reason for the buyer's being willing to pay so large a sum for the stones, and concluded that the heap must contain a gem. The next morning she sent her father-in-law to invite the buyer to supper, and she instructed the men of her family in regard to his entertainment. The best of wine was to be provided, and the father-in-law was to induce him to talk of precious stones, and to cajole him into telling in what way they were to be distinguished from other stones.

The head of the family, listening behind a curtain, heard how the valuable stone in her heap could be discovered. She hastened to find and remove it from the pile; and when her guest had recovered from the effect of the banquet he saw that the value had departed from his purchase. He went to negotiate again with the seller, and she conducted the conference with such skill that she got the price originally agreed upon for the heap of stones and a large sum besides for the one in her possession.

The family, having become wealthy, built an ancestral hall of fine design and elaborate workmanship, and put the words "No Sorrow," as an inscription

over the entrance. Soon after, a Mandarin passed that way, and, noticing this remarkable inscription, had his sedan-chair set down, that he might inquire who were the people that professed to have no sorrow. He sent for the head of the family, and was much surprised on seeing so young a woman thus appear, and said: "Yours is a singular family. I have never before seen one without sorrow, nor one with so young a head. I will fine you for your impudence. Go and weave me a piece of cloth as long as this road."

"Very well," responded the little woman; "so soon as your Excellency shall have found the two ends of the road, and informed me as to the number of feet in its length, I will at once begin the weaving.

Finding himself at fault, the Mandarin added, "And I also fine you as much oil as there is water in the sea."

"Certainly," responded the woman; "as soon as you shall have measured the sea, and sent me correct information as to the number of gallons, I will at once begin to press out the oil from my beans."

"Indeed!" said the Mandarin. "Since you are so sharp, perhaps you can penetrate my thoughts. If you can, I will fine you no more. I hold this pet

quail in my hand; now tell me whether I mean to squeeze it to death or to let it fly in the air."

"Well," said the woman, "I am an obscure commoner, and you are a famed magistrate; if you are no more knowing than I, you have no right to fine me at all. Now I stand with one foot on one side my threshold and the other foot on the other side; tell me whether I mean to go in or to come out. If you cannot guess my riddle, you should not require me to guess yours."

Being unable to guess her intention the Mandarin took his departure. The family lived long in opulence and good repute under its chosen head.

"I do not think the sorrow of losing a wise daughter, by her making a good marriage, is a thing to be considered," said a gray-haired woman who had been listening to the previous conversation. "That which is most distressful is having a daughter make a bad match. The go-betweens deceive, and, for the sake of the fee that is to be obtained upon the accomplishment of the marriage, represent the suitor and his family as being very unlike what they really are. I have known one girl to be thus married to a man who was raving crazy; and another who was married to a horrible dwarf; and another who found herself bound for life to an idiot; and still others who have wedded beggars, when they thought they were to wed capitalists."

"Yes," said Mrs. Summers, "it is all according to the proverb, 'If you mate with a fowl, you fly; if with a dog, you run; if with a fox, you burrow.'"

A MANDARIN IN HIS SEDAN-CHAIR.

"But the concealments or deceptions practised," said another woman, "are not all on the man's side. The would-be bride quite as often makes use of an unscrupulous go-between, to secure a husband and home that is much too good for her. I remember an amusing instance of an attempt, on the part of both the man and the woman, to keep a deformity hidden until after the wedding. There was in the end about equal pleasure in

PROSPECT AND RETROSPECT.

A RICH hunchback called a go-between, promised her a magnificent fee, and told her to get for him a pretty wife, regardless of cost. The go-between undertook the task, and went off to chat about it with another go-between. She said to her gossip that the man was comely so long as he sat down and showed only his face; but that his hump was like a camel's, and would horrify any woman who should marry him. She had often observed that a man who wanted to marry never thought of taking a view of himself from the woman's standpoint.

The second go-between then mentioned that she had a client who was equally selfish. A young widow with a harelip, had intimated to her that she was willing to marry, and that double the usual fee would be given to the go-between if the groom

proved to be handsome. When a widow made up her mind to marry, she was never scrupulous about the method by which she attained her ends.

After other comments on the wickedness of the world, the pair agreed that they would marry their two clients, and divide equally the expected fees. So the first go-between went to the hunchback and told him she had found a bride for him, but that before making definite proposals, she would like to be quite sure he thought the girl pretty, and that if he would pass a certain house he might get a glimpse of her, as she was often out under the fruit-trees. He was grateful to the go-between for giving him the unusual privilege of seeing the bride before marrying her, and he delightedly prepared to travel the road indicated.

The second go-between had informed the widow that a man, who was without a wife, would be passing that way in a sedan chair, and that she would do well to conceal herself in the shrubbery, and peep at him to see whether she thought him handsome enough to become her husband.

Thus the groom, from a chair whose curtains concealed his hunch, saw a graceful girl, who, when she saw a traveller approaching, bashfully covered half her face with her fan. Each was well pleased with the other, and through the shrewd go-betweens,

the betrothal compact was soon made. The wedding followed immediately, for each desired it to take place before any ill luck should betray the fact of deformity.

The bride, closely veiled, was brought to the groom's house. When the marriage rites were completed, and the bride was unveiled by the mistress of ceremonies in the groom's apartment, she modestly held her fan before her face, glancing over it at the groom, who sat opposite to her across a table at which they were to partake of their first meal together. He saw her glossy hair, her fine eyes, and her straight nose, and wondered how he could ever stand in her presence. He was partially screened by the drapery of the gorgeous bridal couch, and looked well in his rich attire. The longer she peeped at him, the more she admired him, and the more she dreaded the revelation of her harelip. The go-betweens had received their fees and departed; the mistress of ceremonies alone remained to wait at table, and was for the moment absent. The bride knew that she could not forever sit there looking over her fan, and she remembered the well-known saying that all matches are fore-ordained; so she suddenly lowered her fan and murmured, "Our prospects are determined by fate." He gazed at her an instant while

the whole truth burst upon him; then rising and turning his back toward her, he looked at her over his hump, and said, "Your prospect is not nearly so bad as my retrospect."

"It may be all very well to blame the go-betweens," said a young wife, who had been sitting silent while her elders exchanged views, "but I have always been told that it is of no use to try to change one's fate in wedlock. I suppose that there is no old couple who could truly say they have never differed with each other in mind. The proverb says: 'The bowl and the plate that have been long used on the same table will have sometimes clashed.' I have noticed that my father-in-law and mother-in-law always disagree with each other, but unite as soon as they are found fault with. They often remind me of a verse my mother repeated when I was little:

'There was an old man and his wife:
The old man always wanted to fast;
The old wife always wanted to feast;
So they lived in continual strife
And, regardless of neighbor or priest,
They disputed and fought, till at last
They each one hauled the other apace
To the judge; but at sound of his mace,
They clasped hands and ran off, as for life.'

"Before I was married off, my brother, who is a great scholar, taught me the saying of Confucius: 'Want of forbearance in small matters often confounds great plans'; and my mother told me to always remember the proverb: 'If you

cannot have the dumpling, it is something to have the soup in which it was boiled.' I think we women must be forbearing, and be thankful when life is not intolerable. What is to be, will be, and every man and woman must consider his and hers

A FOREORDAINED MATCH.

No two can e'er be coupled
Except by link of fate ;
No two can e'er be sundered,
If fore-ordained to mate.

A WOMAN who had two daughters, one a well-grown girl of twelve, the other an infant, told a go-between to betroth the younger one, and bring her the gifts by which a bridegroom binds such a bargain. This same go-between had been requested by a youth of twenty to get a wife for him, and she went and told him that she had found a nice girl that he could have, but that, before the pledges were exchanged, she wished him to see for himself whether the alliance would suit him. Knowing that the elder sister daily carried the younger one out for an airing, the go-between concealed the youth with herself in a copse by the roadside, and when the two girls passed by, the elder carrying the younger pick-a-back, she pointed to them, saying: "There, that is the one!" The youth supposed that

the elder of the two was indicated, and as she was a strong and well-favored lass, he expressed his approval, and the go-between went off and completed the betrothal. The young man, soon after, desired to have the wedding-day fixed, but the go-between put him off repeatedly, by saying that the parents of the bride thought her too young to be placed in his keeping.

Three years thus passed, and the youth, impatient of delay, insisted that the girl was tall enough to marry even when he saw her, and that there could be no sound reason why she should not at once be transferred to his care. This brought about an explanation that his betrothed was not the maiden, but the infant. He knew the uselessness of any attempt to set aside a legal compact of marriage, and he had learned the truth of the proverb, "An affianced girl grows slowly," so he fled to foreign parts and spent several years in trade. Then, getting homesick, he returned to visit his native village, and while there thought he would see how much his bride had grown. Secreting himself in the copse, he watched till she came along the path. When he saw that she was still very small, he was so angry that he picked up a stone and flung it at her head. The stone hit her on her left temple, and she fell, as if dead, on the ground. Fearing that he might be suspected of the murder, he at once went

A GO-BETWEEN COMES WITH A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

abroad, and never dared to make inquiry whether any one suffered in his stead for the evil he had wrought. His business prospered, he amassed wealth, he grew gray-headed, but he never cared to take a wife from among the women of the land in which he lived. His heart always turned to his own country and people, and, after a score of years, he thought that the death of the child must be forgotten, and decided to spend the rest of his life in the home of his youth. He went to his birthplace, built a fine house, furnished it handsomely, and made up his mind that he could afford to have a young wife; so he employed a go-between to seek for him a pretty and youthful bride, and in consideration of the fact that he was an old man, he indicated his willingness to pay for her double the amount that would be given by any young suitor. The go-between, thus commissioned, soon made a successful effort in his behalf, and got for him a young, charming, and comely wife. She was just the age that his first betrothed would have been had she lived, and she had a deep scar on her left temple!

"Matches may be fore-ordained," said Mrs. Summers, "but I am a believer in the proverbial injunction, 'Do your utmost, and then await the will of Heaven.' Care in the choice of a go-between, and leisurely consideration of all proposals, will

frequently avert a calamity in matrimony. 'Urgent spinning makes bad yarn,' says the proverb. But when one is married then it is surely the will of Heaven that one should make the best of it, for 'Cutting off your nose does not remedy a bad odor.' In correct living 'Victory or defeat alike means wounds to soldiers'; but it is better in case of misfortune to act as did a young woman whose hard fate led her into

MARRYING A SIMPLETON.

A BRIDE, on arriving at her husband's house, discovered that she was married to a simpleton. She wisely determined to make the best of her lot, and to endeavor to develop good sense in her husband. As the man was docile, and readily agreed to obey his kind and handsome wife, she hopefully began to educate him.

Some months after her marriage, her father's birthday arrived, and his daughters followed the time-honored custom of making a supper for him in his own house. The youngest daughter was averse to having her foolish husband seen by her happy sisters and her witty brothers-in-law, and thought she would invent some excuse for his absence, and would not allow him to appear at the feast; but he begged so hard to be permitted to go, that, at the last moment, she consented. She gave him some money and told

him to go and buy a handsome suit of clothes, and put them on, and then to follow the line of chaff which she would scatter behind her as she went, and which would guide him to her father's house. Then she gave him minute instructions as to his behavior on his arrival, and told him that, when he sat down to supper, she would tie a string around his ankle, and would pull upon it as a signal for him to take his food. He was to mind the signal, and put his chopsticks into the common bowl only when she gave the sign. She hoped that he might thus take his food politely and not too rapidly, and that his imbecility might not be discovered by her father's guests. Having planned thus carefully for him, she went her way to her father's house, strewing the line of chaff as she went. As it is not customary for Chinese wives to go out in company with their husbands, her coming alone caused no remark when she joined her sisters and helped to spread the feast.

Her husband at once prepared to follow her; but instead of buying good cloth garments, he bought such as are made to be burned at funerals, cut from paper and joined at the seams with paste. Having donned this gorgeous and fragile attire, he carefully followed the line of chaff strewn by his wife. As it happened, the wind had at one point blown the chaff

off the road and upon a pool of water, where it floated deviously; but he conscientiously adhered to its course through the pool, and came out on the other side with his paper garments unpasted and in tatters. In this guise he presented himself at his father-in-law's house, where his chagrined wife borrowed clothes for him to put on, and renewed her instructions concerning his conduct at the supper-table. She tied the string around his ankle, and retired behind the screen where, from her place among the other women, she could watch and direct her husband. Mindful of her words, he used his chop-sticks in accordance with the signals through the string, and behaved so properly, that many who sat with him at table and who had heard that he was a fool, noticed his polite manners, and concluded in their own minds that he had been traduced. But unfortunately a fowl that was running about, searching for crumbs, got its foot entangled in the string, and in its efforts to get away gave rapidly repeated jerks. Supposing that his wife was signalling to him to eat very fast, the poor fool filled his mouth, then his plate, and then snatched his hat from his head and began to put morsels into that, till his table companions, doubtful of his sanity, led him from the room.

After this humiliation, his wife decided that she would never again take him into society, but would stay at home with him and teach him there. A neighbor soon came and complained that her husband had broken his roof by throwing stones upon it. The fool explained that he saw two birds fighting on the roof, and threw the stones in order to separate them. The wife paid for the injury of the roof, and told her husband that when he wanted to separate fighting birds he should not throw stones, but should lay hold of them and take them away from each other. A few days later he came in with torn clothing, having been gored by oxen. He said that he had seen two oxen fighting, and, remembering her orders, had not thrown stones, but had taken them by their heads to separate them, and had thereupon got hurt. She mended his torn clothes, and told him that when he again saw oxen fighting, he must not touch their heads, but must pull their tails. Soon after he came in, scratched and bruised, and when she asked him what was now the matter, he told her that he had found two dogs fighting, and, recollecting her last instructions, had pulled their tails, whereupon the dogs had left each other and had attacked him. She told him he was wrong again. What he ought to have done was to have run and got some

water and to have dashed it on the dogs. He said he would do so next time. After a while he came in crying bitterly, and said that he saw two men fighting, and did as she told him to do. He brought a pail of water and threw it over them; then the men set upon him and beat him so that he could scarcely drag himself home.

His wife saw that he must have some occupation that would keep him out of mischief, and asked him what he would best like to do. He thought he should enjoy buying and selling; so she gave him some money and told him to go to the shore and buy crabs, and take them to the villages inland for sale. He merrily started off, and bought the crabs, carrying them in two baskets slung at the ends of a pole over his shoulder. As he journeyed along in the heat of a summer day, the crabs began to squeak, after the manner of their kind. He thought they were complaining of the sultry confinement in which he kept them, and asked them if they were too hot. They seemed to say that they were. He then inquired whether they would come back when he called them, if he should untie their claws and put them in a pond near by, and they appeared to vociferously assent. He then sent the crabs off for a swim, while he took a nap in the shade of a tree beside the pond.

In the cool of the day, he gathered up his baskets, and called his crabs, reminding them of the promise they had made to him, but no crabs returned. Wearied and discouraged he returned home, and related his mishap to his patient wife. She showed him his mistake in untying the crabs' claws and taking them out from the basket. She told him that if he had simply set the basket, with the crabs, down into the pool, they would have cooled off without danger of his losing them. He said he should be wiser next time, and the next morning he took some more money and started on another business tour. That morning he invested his capital in ducklings, put them, with their feet tied, into his baskets, and again started countryward. The sun was hot, and the ducklings soon began to peep loudly. Thoughtful of his wife's injunction, when he arrived at the pond he set his baskets down into the water without removing the ducklings, and went to take a nap under the tree. When he woke and went to take up his burden, the ducklings were all drowned.

That evening he told his wife that the trouble with his business was that it was too small. If she would give him larger sums to expend, he was sure he should gain something. Willing to teach him

though at much expense, she gave him more money than before, and he went away into the country to purchase fat ducks, to bring into the town market to sell. The fields were just then irrigated for rice-planting, and flocks of wild herons were feeding on the small frogs in the fields. From a distance, he first saw the herons, and, supposing them to be ducks, he called to a man who seemed to be watching them, and asked how much he would sell his ducks for. The man perceived that he was dealing with a fool, and bargained with him, agreeing to exchange all his ducks for all the simpleton's money. The knave told his dupe that the ducks were much attached to him, their owner, and would be driven by no one else so long as he himself was in sight; but that he would leave them very quietly, and as soon as he was gone their new master could drive them wherever he pleased. The fool paid over his money, waited till the pretended owner of the ducks was a long way off, and then took a wand and waved it over the herons to drive them into town. As soon as he raised his stick and shouted, the herons rose into the air and sped away.

Again he went home with nothing but a pitiful tale for his wife. She then relinquished the idea of educating him, and set him to picking up chips.

"I do not doubt that providential discipline made your young woman admirable," said the gray-haired lady. 'Land that has been burnt over is most fertile'; and the proverb, 'It is better to die with the wise than to live with the foolish,' is not applicable to her case. I overheard Pearl, the other day, when she was repeating a sentence of Confucius: 'He who requires much from himself and little from others will keep himself from being the object of resentment.' Women should learn to require little from others, and then they will have less trouble. Too many women think only of suicide as a recourse from an unhappy marriage. I heard of a girl who was married to a fool, and who was saved from suicide by seeing a man

BALING WITH A SIEVE.

A PRETTY and clever girl was married to a half-witted fellow, and lived alone with him in the home of his ancestors. She was skilled in weaving, and once, when she had finished a web of fine linen, she wanted to sell it; but she feared that, if she entrusted it to her husband, he would dispose of it foolishly, and she was too young to go herself to the cloth-market. Having no one else with whom to discuss the subject, she finally mentioned it to her husband, and as he was anxious to please her, he urged her to let him take it to market and sell it for her. With much hesitation, she put the cloth in his hands, telling him to be sure that he sold it for the market-

price. Wishing to fortify him against sharpers, she indulged in a little tirade against human beings generally, and ended up by saying: "Now, remember that among all whose nostrils open downward, not one is honest." The husband wished to win his wife's approbation, and as he went, he repeated over and over to himself her last assertion that "among all whose nostrils open downward, not one is honest." To and fro through the market he paced, with the cloth under his arm, but as all the buyers there had nostrils opening downwards, he considered that they came under his wife's ban, and he made no attempt to negotiate with them. But, toward nightfall, he saw a gentleman who was reading a proclamation posted high on a wall, and as his nostrils therefore opened upward, the fool pulled at his tunic and said to him: "Sir, I have been looking for you all day. My wife told me that among all whose nostrils opened downward, not one is honest; and as your nostrils open upward, I wish to sell you this piece of cloth for its true market value." The gentleman perceived that he had a fool to deal with, so he took the cloth and said: "Go home and tell your wife that her cloth was bought by Mr. Seven-Eight, who lives in the house beside the wasps' nest, behind a grove of jointless bamboos, and that she can send

there to-morrow for the payment." The fool went and gave his wife the message; and, as complaint was useless, she set herself to solve the riddle propounded. She concluded that, since seven and eight are fifteen, the bearer had been born when his father was fifteen years old; that a wasps' nest, whose inmates go in and out with much noise, was likest to a boys' school; and that if a jointless bamboo could be found in the world, it would resemble a gigantic onion-top. She inquired among the old women of the neighborhood whether any one among their acquaintances had, at the age of fifteen, had a son born to him, and she was told of two such, and learned where these sons lived. She then sent her husband to look at the houses of these two sons, and so gained the information that both had onion-beds before them, and that one of them had a boys' school adjoining. To the latter she next day confidently sent her husband to get the payment for the cloth. Mr. Seven-Eight appeared at the door, and when his creditor told him that his wife had sent him, he handed over a fair amount of money and added a covered basket which he told the fool to carry home unopened and to deliver carefully to his wife. The wife received the basket, and did not remove the cover till she was alone. She found in it a lump of dirt, beside a pome-

granate blossom, and she understood that the donor intended to convey to her the idea that she was a fair flower and her husband a clod. Her fate had seemed hard to her, even when other persons did not allude to it, and this symbol set her to weeping over herself as she had never wept before. Her husband was greatly distressed by her red eyes, and he went off privately to Mr. Seven-Eight and told him that he had paid too little for the cloth, for his wife had been weeping continually about it. Mr. Seven-Eight, being an astute man, not only divined the real cause of the tears, but foresaw that the woman would soon attempt to destroy her own life, and that a deep pool in a creek near her house would be the place where she would go to drown herself. Feeling himself responsible for having impelled her toward suicide, he took a sieve to the pool and began baling it out, tossing the water over the road that lay along its brink. Soon after, he saw a young woman, coming alone, in handsome attire, along the path, and when she turned back on seeing him, he was sure he had monopolized the pool none too soon. She approached again at nightfall, found him still baling, and again retired. At midnight, she came again, but the baling was still going on. She then made up her mind that she would go to the pool next morning, and, if the

baling continued, she would say that she wished to pass along that road, complain of its being muddy, and find out how long before the man would stop working there. She accordingly approached near enough to see that the man was baling with a sieve, and she asked him why he was thus spoiling the road by which she wished to journey. He replied that his wife had lately been walking along there, and had lost a needle. He wanted to find it for her, and as he thought it might have dropped into the pool, he was trying to bale the pool dry, to see if the needle was at the bottom.

She said to herself : "Here is a man trying to bale out with a sieve a pool in a running stream, in order to find a needle for his wife. I am not the only woman who has a fool for a husband. As this man is much older than my husband, his wife is probably much older than I, and she has not killed herself. If she can endure life with her husband, who is certainly a greater fool than mine, then I ought also to be able to live." Thus reasoning, she turned back homeward, and Mr. Seven-Eight, perceiving that his object was accomplished, also went his way.

"But," said Mrs. Summers "to marry an idiot, a hump-back, or an opium-smoker, need not make the wife utterly miserable. If she has a just mother-in-law, a generous father-

in-law, and kind sisters-in-law, she may, in spite of her husband's traits, find life worth living. The best of husbands cannot make his wife happy unless his relatives treat her with respect. So long as a woman has no legal rights, and can hold no property as her own, and is always under the dominion of her seniors in her husband's household, the chances are that she will have more troubles than comforts, until she is old enough, and has descendants enough, to make herself an authority in the family. It is especially hard when a girl marries a man who has grown-up children; and this often happens, for, as the proverb says, 'When a wife dies, her successor is her junior; when a husband dies, his successor is his senior.' I remember a story that my aunt told me, about

THE WIDOW AND THE SAGACIOUS MAGISTRATE.

A RICH old widower who was collecting rent on his farms chanced to see a pretty young woman, and fell in love with her. He made inquiry about her, and ascertained that she was an orphan, and lived with her grandmother on his estate. He sought the grandmother, and by offering her a present of four hundred ounces of silver he gained her consent to his taking the young woman as his wife. The girl was not altogether satisfied with the prospect, but she had no right of appeal against the decision of her sole relative, and in due time she was sent off in a sedan-chair to the house of the aged bridegroom.

BEFORE THE MAGISTRATE.

When the sedan-chair approached the groom's abode, his only son, already a husband and parent, thought that his father had bought for him an inferior wife, and was greatly pleased; but the bride was ushered into the old man's apartments, and the enraged son sought his own wife for conference regarding the course of action which they two ought to pursue under such scandalous parental behavior. The two decided that they would never receive the young bride as a mother, and would ignore her presence in the house.

The old husband was kind to his little wife, gave her plenty of money, and hired servants to do her bidding. After her baby boy was born she became in some measure reconciled to her lot. When her boy was seven years old he went to the same school with his nephew, and there the two children quarrelled and fought. The nephew, being older and stronger, drew blood on his little uncle, and both children went home and told their parents about the conflict. This set the little wife to considering the fact that she had not strength to cope with her opponents in the house. Her husband was not so strong as was his eldest son, she herself was not so strong as was that son's wife, and her son was not so strong as was his nephew. She saw that she lacked power to maintain her rights, and she begged her husband to divide his

property, so that she and her son might, in case of his death, have a home from which their enemies could not drive them.

He told her that no arrangement which he could make would secure her against wrong after his death, and that any will he might devise would be destroyed or disregarded. But he gave her a water-color portrait of himself, and told her to take it, when her time of need should come, to a certain magistrate, and to present it to him along with her plea for protection.

Soon after this the old man died, and the funeral was scarcely over when the worst that his widow had apprehended came to pass. She and her son had a tumble-down out-house assigned to them to live in, and all else that had belonged to the old man was taken possession of by his eldest son. Then the widow, following her deceased husband's directions, carried the picture to the magistrate and told her story, asking for justice at the hands of the Emperor's representative.

As the family and its affairs were widely known, the magistrate felt that his reputation as a sagacious ruler was at stake. He took the picture, sent the plaintiff home, and sat down alone to meditate on the case. The aged husband had apparently left no written will, knowing that such a paper would be secretly or forci-

bly destroyed; the son was strong and rich; no verdict of a court of justice could prevent oppression of the widow if she were to live in the house with the elder son, and it would be difficult to induce him to support her elsewhere.

The magistrate was disturbed by the difficulties of the case, and could neither eat nor sleep. He sat late at night looking at the likeness, and wondering what his old friend, now deceased, could have expected him to do. A servant brought refreshments on a tray, but he took nothing besides a cup of tea, which he mechanically held while he meditated. Finally, forgetting the teacup, it slipped from his hand, and its contents were spilled on the picture that lay before him. The paper thus wetted became transparent, and letters showed themselves through the painted surface. The magistrate tore off the outer layer of paper, and discovered underneath it a folded document adhering to the cardboard on which the picture was mounted. The document was the last will and testament of the deceased, and contained a full account of all he had possessed, with instruction how to find a hidden treasure, with two thousand ounces of silver which was bequeathed to the magistrate as a payment for redressing the wrongs of the widow. The magistrate committed the will to memory, destroyed it, and then

notified the son that he had an important communication to make to him.

When the son arrived the magistrate invited him to sit with him on the divan, and then immediately arose to welcome another guest. Though no one besides the magistrate and the son was visible in the room, the former conducted a third person to the seat of honor, and appeared to converse respectfully with the new-comer. The son thought the magistrate was out of his mind.

Presently the magistrate fell into a trance, and said to the son: "Child, after my death you drove my wife from my house and took all my goods, giving no share to my youngest son. You have angered me in my grave. Now if you repent of your sin toward me, and divide my property as I direct, it will be well with you; but if you are obstinate you shall never know where I have concealed my most valuable possessions."

The son told the magistrate he was under the influence of a demon, and that his words should receive no credence. The magistrate assured him that his father's spirit sat on the divan, but the son declined to believe this assertion.

Then said the magistrate: "Let us test the truth of the presence in a practical way. If it tells me where the treasure is to be found, and we indeed find

the treasure in that place, that will prove that I am guided by your father's spirit."

The son assented, and an assemblage was called of the neighboring gentry, the officials, the village elders, and the young widow with her child. The magistrate reserved the seat of honor in the company for the invisible plaintiff, and continued to treat him as if he were there in visible shape. The whole case was stated, and an agreement entered into between the two parties, the magistrate always interpreting to all present the words of the deceased. A compact was made before all these witnesses that all the treasure whose place of concealment should be made known by the deceased should be considered as belonging to the widow and her boy, and that two thousand ounces of silver, also concealed, should be delivered to the magistrate in compensation for the service rendered by him to the widow.

All these points being fully explained and settled, the whole assemblage followed the magistrate—who appeared to converse with the spirit as he went —to the miserable out-house in which the widow was sheltered; and there with picks and hoes they dug up treasure that made the little son much richer than his elder brother. They found also the two thousand ounces of silver, which was trans-

ferred to the magistrate, according to the will of the deceased.

Then all the people, believing the widow and her son to be protected by the old man's spirit, treated them with distinguished consideration, and they lived in comfort together ever after. The widow's son became a successful candidate in the literary examinations, and eventually a high officer of state.

The gray-haired lady, observing that the third watch of the night had just been announced by a crowing cock, took her leave, and all the other visitors followed. Pearl lay awake long past midnight, thinking what anguish would be hers if she should be forever separated from Golden Branch. The next day, before returning to her grandmother's house, and to school, she asked and gained a promise from her parents that they would not betroth her until they should have consulted her. This promise removed her fear of present danger, but she knew that, sooner or later, she must, like other women, be disposed of in marriage, and after her return, in her boys' garb, to her studies, she planned a betrothal for herself, by a scheme which would expose her to no charge of unwomanliness.

Walking alone, one twilight, on the city wall, with her bow in her hand, she fastened to her arrow a billet, on which was written: "To him who finds this arrow will I give my sister in marriage.—SUMMERS." Then she held the arrow before High Heaven, prayed that it might reach the hand of Golden Branch, and shot it toward the yard beside the school-room, where she knew Golden Branch was practising at quoits. Golden Branch picked up the arrow as it fell;

but at the same moment there came to him a messenger who said that the elder Branch was ill, and had summoned Golden to his bedside. Alarmed by this news, Golden put the arrow, with its unopened billet, into his desk in the schoolroom, and hastened to his father's house. Grouse, who was prowling about the room a few moments later, took the arrow from the desk, opened and read the billet, recognized the handwriting and the surname, and at once determined that he would secure the unknown girl for himself. He thereupon took the arrow to his fellow-student, Summers, saying that as soon as he should have graduated he should claim the fulfilment of the pledge. Pearl looked upon her fate as sealed, and went about her duties with a heavy heart.

Soon after this, Golden Branch, Pearl, and Grouse, having studied for many years, and all being aspirants for a literary degree, were to go to the Provincial Capital for examination before the Literary Chancellor. Pearl, fearing that by some accident she would be put to confusion should she go in company with her classmates, feigned illness, until the other two were gone. They had scarcely departed, when Pearl heard that her father had been arrested upon an unjust accusation of debt, and had been taken to prison in the town. Mrs. Summers arrived at her mother's house, to confer with Pearl concerning the efforts that should be made for the release and vindication of the prisoner.

Mr. Summers had no brothers, and his parents were dead. It was therefore difficult to find a relative to act in his behalf in the necessary legal proceedings. His wife's relatives, and two of his uncles, assembled in the evening to talk over the case. Mrs. Summers said that her husband had never tried to gain influential friends, but had obeyed the laws, hoping to avoid lawsuits. She and he had laid to heart the story of the man who had

A LAWYER AS A DEBTOR.

THERE is a proverb which says: "The society of magnates impoverishes one, while by consorting with beggars, one may get a handful of rice." A poor man, who had a wholesome dread of litigation, lived near an astute and influential lawyer. Though the peasant was at peace with all his neighbors, he thought it well to secure an ally for time of war, so he took presents of fish, flesh, and fowl to the lawyer, thinking to thus gain his friendship, and engage his help in case of need.

The lawyer accepted every whit that the peasant brought to him, without putting any return gift in the trays or baskets in which the presents were brought, expressing thus his willingness to be under obligations to the donor. The peasant continued to send edibles, and the lawyer continued to receive them, until the lawyer's wife had her wonder aroused by her husband's readiness to take all the presents offered, while he made no return either in kind or in other kind. So one day when some hampers arrived from the peasant, and her husband accepted all their contents without laying anything in the basket for the messenger to take back as a compensation, she ventured to inquire from her husband how he intended to repay the poor man for all the gifts; whether he had in mind some way

PLOUGHING.

Yale University
Library

in which he should render important assistance to him, or whether he had planned the conveyance of some valuable property to him. The lawyer replied that he should take all that the man brought, and had given orders for the retention of everything that might arrive when he was absent. In course of time he would get the donor involved in a lawsuit, and then would extricate him as a payment for past favors. To act once as his advocate in a suit would cancel all his indebtedness.

As it happened, the peasant's messenger had not departed, and overheard through an open window this conversation between the lawyer and his wife. He hastened quietly away, and told the maker of presents what recompense he was to receive for his gifts, whereupon the client concluded that he would be better off if he had not a lawyer among his debtors.

"It may be well," said Pearl's grandmother, "not to depend on magnates for help in time of need, but then one must be able either to help one's self, or to endure affliction. I am much afraid of using official influence for gaining a point. 'He who rides a tiger finds it hard to dismount,' and if there is any way of getting along without applying to the magistrate, let us follow it. But my son-in-law is likely to suffer unless he is supplied with the necessary bribes to jailers. He is not like the artist, who, in crossing a desert

where he could find no spring, painted a plum so skilfully that, whenever he looked at it, it made his mouth water, and thus prevented his feeling thirst. Nor is he gifted with powers of conciliation which would enable him to release himself as did

THE SINGING PRISONER.

A FRIENDLESS man was thrown into prison, with his feet and hands bound, and lay on the stone floor unfed and uncared for. He thought within himself that as he had no hope of freedom, and as crying would not shorten the hours, he would do his best toward being content where he was; so he began to cheer himself by reciting plays that he knew by heart. So exquisitely did he vary the parts of the speakers, taking in due turn the voice of aged man, virile robber, or delicate maiden, that he soon drew all his fellow-prisoners into a charmed circle around him. Those who had food shared it with him, that he might have strength to continue the entertainment; the turnkey unlocked his fetters that he might recite more loudly; the constables finally gave him better quarters that they might comfortably listen to him in leisure moments; the petty officers reported his stories to their friends, and thereby gradually won for him a constituency, whose influence prevailed with the magistrate and secured his release.

"No," said Pearl's grandfather, "Summers will mope and pine, no matter how much care we take to send him good food or cheering messages. But he is guiltless, and 'Where there is no iniquity there should be no fear.' It is true that the courts are corrupt. 'The sluice that does not perform its office is a cesspool,' as the proverb says; and he who slips into that cesspool, the courts, may easily drown. But we will hope for the best. Summers is not likely to involve himself as did a man who was

SELF-CONVICTED.

A MAN left his father's house and went abroad on business. After several years' absence he returned, and a few days later was throttled at night in his bed. There was no evident cause for the murder, and no clue to the murderer. His parents besought the magistrate to fathom the mystery. Seven men were arrested on suspicion, and interrogated under torture, but no one among them owned the crime. They were kept in prison, while the magistrate vainly sought for circumstantial evidence or accidental proof of their guilt.

After some time, a famous provincial judge came to the local court, and the magistrate put the case into his hands. The judge called the men before him, and informed them that the assistance of a god, powerful in the detection of criminals, had been brought by

him to convict the guilty one among them. They would be required to pass the night in an empty room, standing naked in the presence of the god, who would during the night set his stamp on the back of the assassin. The others would the next morning be set free.

Accordingly, the men were put into a cell so dark that they could see nothing but a strange god of huge size and threatening aspect, enthroned in the centre of the floor. Appropriate invocations were chanted, and the men were left to pass the night with the god. At dawn, the judge and his subordinates came into the cell, and commanded the seven to stand in a row with their backs toward the god.

The walls of the cell had, the day before, been rubbed over with soot, and one man's back was found to be well begrimed, through his efforts to press it so tightly against the wall as to prevent the god from finding space to set a stamp on it. On his being declared by the judge to be the sealed man, he immediately confessed the crime and was beheaded.

"Mother wit," said one of the uncles, "does more than does a clear consience in keeping one out of the clutches of knaves. 'You cannot peacefully take away a tiger's cubs,' nor can you without opposition remove from the courts a source of revenue to the constables. I think that Summers, instead of protesting that he does not owe the money,

WOMEN AT A SHRINE.

should bring witnesses to prove that he has paid it. A countercharge is as good as a receipt. He might take a hint from the young woman who was the owner of

THE LADLE THAT FELL FROM THE MOON.

Once there was an old woman who lived on what she got by wile from her relatives and neighbors. Her husband's brother lived alone with his only son, in a house near hers, and when the son brought home a wife she went to call on the bride. During the call she inquired of the bride whether she had not, since her arrival in the house, heard at night a scratching among the boxes containing her wedding outfit. The bride said she had not. A few days later, the old woman came again, and during the visit the bride remarked that, before the matter was mentioned, she had heard no scratching among her boxes, but that since that time she had listened for it, and had heard it every night. The old woman advised her to look carefully after her clothing, saying that there were evidently many mice in the house, and that she would be likely at any time to find her best garments nibbled into shreds. The old woman knew there was no cat in the house, but she inquired whether there was one, and on hearing that there was not, she offered to lend the young woman her own black-and-white cat, saying

that it would soon extirpate all the mice. The bride accepted the loan, and the old woman brought the cat, and left it in the bride's apartment. After a few hours the cat disappeared, and the bride, supposing it to have gone home, made no search for it. It did indeed go home, and the old woman secretly disposed of it; but several days later, she came to the young woman and said that when she lent the cat her house was free from mice, but that, as soon as the cat was gone, the mice came and multiplied so fast that now everything was overrun by them, and she would be obliged to take the cat home again. The young woman told her that the cat went away the same day that it came, and she had supposed it went home. The old woman said it had not, and that nothing could compensate her for the loss of it, for she had reared it herself; that there was never before seen such a cat for catching mice; that a cat spotted as that one was, was seldom found; and that it was of the rare breed which gave rise to the common saying,

> A coal-black mouser, with white loins,
> Is worth its weight in silver coins,

and that the weight of her cat was two hundred ounces.

The young woman was greatly surprised by this

estimate of the value of the lost cat, and went to her father-in-law and related all that had occurred. The father-in-law, knowing the character of the old woman, could neither eat nor sleep, so harassed was he by the expectation that she would worry his daughter-in-law till the two hundred ounces of silver should be paid. The young woman, being a new-comer, thought but lightly of the matter, till the old woman came again and again to make mention of the cat. When it became apparent that she must defend herself, the young woman asked her father-in-law if he had ever lent anything to the old woman; and when he said he could not remember having lent anything, she begged him to think carefully and see if he could not recall the loan of a tool, a dish, or a fagot. He finally recollected that he had lent to her an old wooden ladle, but he said it originally cost but a few farthings, and was certainly not worth speaking about.

The next time that the old woman came to dun for the amount due for her cat, the young woman asked her to return the borrowed ladle. The old woman said that the ladle was old and valueless; that she had allowed the children to play with it, and they had dropped it in the dirt, where it had lain until she picked it up and used it for kindlings. The bride responded: "You expect to enrich yourself and your

family by means of your cat. I and my family also want money. Since you cannot give back the ladle, we will both go before the magistrate and present our cases. If your cat is adjudged to be worth more than my ladle, I will pay you the excess ; and if my ladle be worth more than your cat, then you must pay me." Being sure that the cat would, by any judge, be considered of greater value than the ladle, the old woman agreed to the proposition, and the two went before the magistrate. The young woman courteously gave precedence to the elder, and allowed her to make the accusation. The old woman set forth her case, and claimed two hundred ounces of silver as a compensation for the loss of her cat. When she had concluded her statement, the judge called on the young woman for her defence. She said she could not disprove the statement, but that the claim was offset by a ladle that had been borrowed by the plaintiff. There was a common saying,

> In the moon overhead, at its full, you can see
> The trunk, branches, and leaves of a cinnamon tree.

A branch from this tree had one night been blown down before her father-in-law's door, and he had had a ladle made from the wood. Whatever the ladle was put into, never diminished by use. Whether wine,

oil, rice, or money, the bulk remained the same if no ladle beside this one were used in dipping it. A foreign inn-keeper, hearing of this ladle, came and offered her father-in-law three thousand ounces of silver for it, but the offer was refused. And this ladle was the one that the plaintiff had borrowed and destroyed.

The magistrate, on hearing this defence, understood that the cat had been a pretext for extortion, and decided that the two claims offset each other, so that no payment was due from either.

"Wit is wealth," said the other uncle. "These are degenerate days, and we have degenerate rulers. Men nowadays do not get justice from the magistrates as in the olden times."

"Perhaps," said Pearl, "the people who cry out for justice from the magistrate are not themselves just. I have always liked the young woman, who, having discovered a wrong, punished it herself, as is told in the story of

A WIFE'S VENGEANCE.

A BEAN-CURD maker had an old mother and a pretty young wife. The wife helped her husband make the curd in a room behind the shop, and the old mother assisted in selling it at a counter extending across the front of the shop, along the quiet street. The only son of a rich merchant used to pass frequently, on his

way to and from his studies, and he chanced to see the little wife. He was so impressed by her beauty that he often stopped at the counter to buy curd, with the hope of getting a peep at her through the door into the back room. He did this for many months, chatting sometimes with the unsuspecting husband and mother-in-law, and he came to be looked upon by them as a very honest and affable customer. When the acquaintance had become one of long standing, the three used to occasionally talk together of personal affairs.

The more the young man saw the little wife, the more he coveted her, and at last he became so jealous of her husband, with whom she was evidently friendly, that he determined to be rid of him. He told the husband that he was going to a distant port, in charge of goods on one of his father's junks, and that, if the husband liked to go along and take some of his wares to sell, he would give him passage, and would furnish half the capital needed in the venture. The bean-curd maker thought the opportunity promising, made ready, and went on the voyage. His sales were so large that he afterward took a second journey and then a third. During the third voyage, by device of the lover, the husband was alone with him on deck at night, and was pushed overboard by him. The hus-

band was a good swimmer, and swam toward the boat, but his rival repeatedly pushed him off with an oar, until he was exhausted and sank. The boat returned to its port, and the young man told the mother and wife that the man fell overboard in the night, and that, though every effort was made, he could not be saved, nor could his body be recovered.

After this the murderer continued to falsely befriend the two mourning women, being careful to so manage that they should have a keen sense of their poverty and helplessness. He then sent one who appeared to be disinterested, to suggest to the two women that it would be wise for the young widow to marry some well-to-do man, who would protect her and take care of the old mother. When they had had time to be impressed with the wisdom of this advice, and to become thoughtful as to whether any man who might wish to marry the widow would undertake the support of the mother, the young man sent a formal proposal of marriage, with the promise of a monthly stipend sufficient for support to the elder woman. The little widow was anxious for her mother-in-law's welfare, and she was grateful to the rich man's son for the many favors she supposed he had done them, so she consented to be his wife. He loved her for her beauty, and she esteemed him for his benevolence,

and they lived harmoniously together. After two years a son was born to them, and they were happier than ever. One festival-day the wife reminded the husband that she had never seen all the grounds about their house, and suggested that, as every one else was that day seeking recreation, he should take her and the child out for a stroll. He acceded to her request, and they went out among their flower-gardens and fish-pools. As they stood watching the gold-fish in one of the tanks, a toad hopped upon the curb, and she, in disgust, poked it off into the water with a stick. The toad swam back toward her, and she repeatedly pushed it away, till she heard her husband laugh, and suddenly looking into his face, felt sure that he was amused, not by her, but by some recollection. She asked him to tell her why he laughed, and was not at all satisfied by his reply that her pushing the toad away was ludicrous. Finding insistence vain, she became angry because he would not tell her the true reason for his laughter, and went home in a huff. He used his best powers of reasoning to pacify her, but she averred that he had some thought that he did not share with her ; that after she had lived with him for many years supposing that he kept nothing from her, she found that he had concealed something ; that she was sure he had laughed with a meaning, and

THE LOTUS POOL.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of Toronto

would not tell her what was the memory that amused him. She stayed in a passion; she moped; she neglected her toilet; she was cross with her child; she made her husband altogether miserable. Days and weeks passed, and he told her everything beside the truth, but he could neither win back her smiles, nor convince her of error in her judgment. He thought the matter over and over, and considered that she had lived happily with him for many years, and was very fond of their boy; that until the present trouble arose, she had never been other than charming, and he sorely missed her usual winsomeness; that it must be easy for a woman to forgive a sin that came from love of her. After much mental debate, seeing in her no sign of yielding the point, and fearing that his happiness was imperilled by silence as much as by speech, he decided to tell her all. He sat down alone with her, and said he would tell her whatever she wished to know. She began to smile so enchantingly that he was encouraged to go on, and he told her that her pushing away with a stick a toad that kept swimming back toward her made him think how he had treated his rival in her affection. She concealed the horror which his narrative inspired, and smiled and listened, and asked a few questions with winning curiosity, till she knew the whole story of

the foul murder of her first husband. Then, shutting her rage in her heart, she said: "The dead are dead, and we are alive; while we live let us live cheerfully." She alluded to the matter no more that day, but resumed her duties and pleasures so blithely that her husband thought he had reasoned well, and that there never was so fascinating a woman as she. That night she stabbed him to the heart, while he slept. In his agony he rolled off the bed and expired on the floor. Then she put on sackcloth, dishevelled her hair, girded her waist, and, sitting by the dead man, awaited the morning.

When it grew late, without sound or movement in the room, her mother-in-law came to call the occupants to breakfast. Getting no response she opened the door, and found the corpse and the murderess. The magistrate was at once notified, and the woman was summoned for trial. Her own relatives, those of her two husbands, and a great concourse of spectators being assembled, she told her story. Then the judge said: "You have yourself avenged the murder of your first husband; who is to avenge the murder of your second husband?" "I, myself," she answered, and plunged a dagger into her own heart.

"Oh, Pearl," said her grandfather, "your education has made you self-confident. You will some day learn that, how-

ever great the corruption of the rulers, their public judgments are less dangerous than the exercise of private vengeance. The individual should not rectify wrongs done to himself, for he is sure to lose sight of the extenuating circumstances. We all know that, in ancient days, the magistrates loved the people, and took no bribes, and strove to elicit truth. They invented methods of inquiry and used all arts on the side of justice. Just now an instance comes to my mind in which an ancient judge took unusual measures for recovering some

STOLEN GARLIC.

A POOR man planted a bed of garlic, and as he had no land besides, each plant was separately tended and grew apace. When the crop was almost large enough for pulling he placed beside the bed a portable hutch, and slept there o' nights to guard against thieves. After watching for many nights without seeing sign of trespassers, he concluded that there were none about, and that he might as well sleep at home; so he left the empty hutch beside the garlic bed, and spent the night in his own house. When he came back next morning to water his vegetables, he found that all had been pulled and carried off.

In consternation and tears he went to the magistrate and entered complaint of his loss. The magistrate called him up for examination, and asked him why he did not seize the thief.

"Because, your honor, I was not there when he came."

"Then why do you not bring as witness some one who saw him?"

"Because, your honor, nobody caught a glimpse of him."

"Then why did you not bring from the garlic bed some clue by which he might be traced?"

"Because, your honor, he left nothing in the bed besides the portable hutch which was there before."

"Very well," said the magistrate; "since the hutch was the only object known to be on the field at the time of the theft, we will make the hutch the defendant in the suit, and to-morrow morning you will appear here as plaintiff against it."

The complaint and the result of the preliminary examination were reported far and wide, with the official announcement that on the next morning a portable hutch would be tried for theft. So remarkable a trial had never before been heard of, and it became the subject of inquiry, comment, and debate throughout the neighborhood.

When the case was called the court was crowded with spectators. The constables brought in the hutch and put it in the place for prisoners. It was charged with the crime, and as it offered no defence

A FLOWER SHOW.

the magistrate ordered that it should be beaten until it confessed its guilt. The constables administered blows with a will, leaving it shattered in pieces. As the punishment proceeded, the amazement of the spectators gave way before their sense of the ludicrous, and by the time the constables were following up and whipping the fragments of the hutch the audience were laughing heartily.

In apparent rage the magistrate charged the whole assembly with contempt of court, ordered all the gates to be shut and locked, and fined each person present a pound of garlic, with no release till the fine should be paid. Many constables were deputed to escort those who wished to go out to buy garlic, and each merrily spent a few farthings in paying his fine.

In the course of the day all the garlic in the market had been bought up, and the adjoining hamlets had been ransacked to supply the unwonted demand. Each, as he handed in his fine, was required to tell where he got the garlic, which was then deposited bunch by bunch in a chamber of the court-house.

When all the fines were paid, the plaintiff was invited to examine the bunches of garlic, and to state whether he recognized any as his own. He unhesitatingly declared certain bunches to be his, and when

the record of the purchasers was examined, these bunches were found to have been all bought at the stall of a certain green-grocer. The green-grocer was arrested, and made to tell where he got the stolen goods. He declared that he knew nothing more about the garlic than that he had bought it from a certain villager. The villager was arrested and was proven by circumstantial evidence to have committed the theft. The magistrate thus got for himself a great reputation for sagacity; the thief got forty blows; and the poor gardener had awarded to him all the garlic that had been received in fines for contempt of court.

"Unfortunately," said one of the uncles, "it is not an ancient but a modern judge that we have to deal with. If some one among the literati would advocate Summers' case, it would be easy to get him acquitted."

"One of my classmates," said Pearl, "is sure to get his degree, and then when he comes back with his blushing honors he will lend his powerful help in taking father from prison."

Before the conclave broke up, it was decided that Pearl should at once start for the Provincial Capital,to get the immediate assistance of Golden Branch and Grouse in her father's lawsuit. She set out, in her student's dress, and, as she was obliged to pass several nights at inns along the road, she fell in with many other travellers. One night the inn was crowded. She could get no private room, and was obliged to spend the long hours reclining on a platform where

a dozen other sojourners took up their lodgment. As the mosquitoes and the heat made sleep impossible, one of the most wakeful of the guests proposed story-telling, and himself began the entertainment with the story of

TWO FRUGAL MEN.

A STINGY man who was going on a journey took with him rice to boil for his meals, and carried as condiment a salt shrimp, of which he smelled whenever the rice seemed insipid. As he was eating his plain fare he noticed another traveller, who put his chopsticks into a little jar and then carried them empty to his mouth. He was curious to know how economy greater than his own could be practised consistently with the satisfaction of appetite, and so he accosted his fellow-traveller, asking him to explain his method. The man, who had observed the frugal device of the inquirer, and recognized in him a kindred spirit, readily communicated his secret. He said he carried a mug of brine, dipped his chopsticks therein, and touched his tongue whenever he wished to give zest to his repast.

The admiration of the other was won, and the two men had such confab as is possible only between congenial minds bent on a common object.

It appeared that the brine-taster had a marriageable

son, while the shrimp-smeller had a daughter of the same age. A betrothal between the two was settled upon, and the two men, having thus plighted kinship, went each his way. The brine-taster was returning to his abode, and as the route of the shrimp-man took him a few days later past the door of his new relative he improved the opportunity and called to see him. He was received with demonstrations of great pleasure and the host, within hearing of the guest, gave order that a very large fish, one not less than six inches long, should be bought and cooked for supper. The fish having been brought, the host thought it more than was necessary for one meal, and directed that the one half of it be put in pickle, and that the half bearing the tail should be fried. When the guest sat down to supper and saw the fried fish he exclaimed against the extravagant hospitality displayed, and declared that, rather than a second time cause such outlay to his friend, he should start for his home next morning before breakfast. This he, in fact, did, with many expressions of regret at having been the cause of expense to his host.

On reaching home he found that a guest had arrived just before him, and at the suggestion of his wife he took a basket and went toward the market to buy something to eat. Meditating on what he could

get cheap, he remembered what he had had for supper the previous evening, and sent a boy with a note to his host, saying: "A visitor has unexpectedly arrived at my house, and I send to ask the loan of your pickled fish, with which to grace my humble board."

The messenger soon returned with the fish, and a letter saying: "Since it is you who ask it, I cannot do otherwise than send the fish. But do not allow it to be softened by water. Fry it hard, so that the chopsticks pointed toward it may not spoil its contour. Fry it hard, I say, and then you can return it to me intact."

The innkeeper's son had brought in hot tea, and he stopped to remark that men would often pay out one large sum of money ungrudgingly, while they would refuse to pay a lesser amount in driblets. One of his relatives was a widower who had three sons and three daughters-in-law, all of whom lived with him till their families became so large that he built new houses and divided his land among his sons. To each son he gave land and a house; and then he told his daughters-in-law that when they should leave his house they should take with them none of its furniture, but that he would buy for each all that she should require to furnish her new home, if she would but tell him what she needed. The eldest daughter-in-law gave him her list verbally. It included saucepans, skimmers, dippers, pots, kettles, jars, skewers, plates, cups, and dozens of other items; and when she thought she had only begun to make known her needs, the old man told her to stop; that he should never be able to buy all she wanted; and in a rage he sent her away.

The second daughter-in-law judiciously tried to shorten her list, and had it written out under heads of furniture, bedding, and kitchen utensils; but she was likewise summarily dismissed on suspicion of reducing the old man to poverty. When the third daughter-in-law came to express her requirements, the old man was surly, and sharply inquired how many things *she* wanted. She told him she wanted but one, and he at once assured her that she should have it. She then named a sum of money sufficient to furnish her house, and the old man willingly gave her the amount. She bought with it more than her sisters-in-law had asked for, and had pin-money left.

A traveller in a horse-hair cap, ornamented with a large red silk button, said that men sometimes contributed a thousand ounces of silver toward the building of a Confucian temple, and scowled when their wives asked them for coppers to buy a broom with.

Pearl was wondering whether Golden Branch would be as fair toward her when he should know that she was a woman as he had always been while he supposed her to be a man; and as she thought, her anxiety deepened. But a traveller in a purple-damask sleeveless coat just then said that the story of the two frugal men had reminded him of one about

THE MOST FRUGAL OF MEN.

A MAN who was the most frugal in the kingdom heard of another man who was the most frugal in the world. He said to his son: "We live upon little, but if we were more frugal we might live upon nothing. It will be worth while for us to get instruction in economy from the most frugal of men." The

son agreed, and the two decided that the son should go and inquire whether the master in economic science would take pupils. An exchange of presents being a necessary preliminary to closer intercourse, the father told the son to take the smallest of coins, one farthing, and to buy a sheet of paper of the cheapest sort. The boy by bargaining got two sheets of paper for the farthing. The father put away one sheet, cut the other sheet in halves, and on one half drew a picture of a pig's head. This he put into a large covered basket, as if it were the thing which it represented—the usual gift sent in token of great respect. The son took the basket, and after a long journey reached the abode of the most frugal man in the world.

The master of the house was absent, but his son received the traveller, learned his errand, and accepted the offering. Having taken from the basket the picture of the pig's head, he said, courteously, to his visitor: "I am sorry that we have nothing in the house that is worthy to take the place of the pig's head in your basket. I will, however, signify our friendly reception of it by putting in four oranges for you to take home with you."

Thereupon the young man, without having any oranges at hand, made the motions necessary for

putting the oranges into the basket. The son of the most frugal man in the kingdom then took his basket and went to his father to tell of thrift surpassing his own.

When the most frugal man in the world returned home his son told him that a visitor had been there, having come from a great distance to take lessons in economy. The father inquired what offering he brought as an introduction, and the son showed the small outline of the pig's head on thin brown paper. The father looked at it, and then asked his son what he had sent as a return present. The son told him he had merely made the motions necessary for transferring four oranges, and showed how he had clasped the imaginary oranges and deposited them in the visitor's basket. The father flew into a rage and boxed the boy's ears, exclaiming: "You extravagant wretch! With your fingers thus far apart you appeared to give him large oranges. Why did n't you measure out small ones?"

A burly man in a blue tunic said he had thought of a story, but he suddenly started up, and snatching off his shoe, struck with it at a gray house-lizard, which was considered by them all to be very poisonous. The enemy having been dispatched, the conversation turned upon the dangers incurred through these little pests, and the burly man remarked that a relative of his had been brought to death's door by

the mere fancy that he had swallowed a portion of one. The man, who was cooking his mid-day meal, left the cover off his pot and a lizard fell in and was cooked. While eating his porridge the man found the hinder half of the lizard in his mouth, and was so horrified by the idea that he had swallowed the other half of the creature, that he lost his appetite, became sallow and feeble, and in danger of death through debility. He invited the best physicians to prescribe for him, telling each the cause of his malady, and one after another undertook to cure him, but each finally gave up his case in despair. At last a quack, having indirectly heard the tale that had been told to more honest men, came and proposed to the patient to cure him, provided that he would suitably manifest his gratitude after his restoration to health. This being agreed to, the quack assured the patient that he possessed a remarkable remedy, known to but few, very costly, and so potent that a single dose infallibly removed all poison from the system. He then administered a powerful emetic, and at a moment of terrible nausea dropped the anterior half of a boiled lizard so that it appeared to fall from the patient's mouth. The attention of the patient was then called to it, and he delightedly acquiesced in the assertion that the cause of his ailment was removed. From that hour he gained appetite and strength, and became well and portly. The quack was well rewarded for his supposed skill, and his fame spread widely, from the mouth of his grateful patient.

"The saying goes," said Pearl, "that 'an imaginary disease may be cured by a quack medicine, but a real disease no medicine can cure.'" She then asked the burly man for his story and he narrated one concerning

MISAPPLIED WIT.

A YOUNG literary graduate was on his way home from the city-school where he taught. The trustee had paid him ten ounces of silver, and he was hastening to spend New Year with his wife and children in his native village. On the road he met a woman carrying a sleeping infant, and crying bitterly. He inquired the cause of her distress, and when he learned that her husband had been imprisoned for a debt of ten ounces of silver, he gave her all he had, and went on his way with an empty stomacher.

Soon after his arrival at his own house, his wife told him of accumulated market-bills that she had promised to pay on his return, and of household requirements that he must provide for. He was therefore obliged to confess to her that he had given away all that was due on his salary. She advised him to go to a neighboring cooper, to borrow his tools, and to go off during the holidays, mending buckets at the doors of such as would employ him, thus earning something with which to meet the demands of his family. As the wife's discomfort was the result of his own hasty compassion, the man felt obliged to act upon her suggestion, and so he borrowed the tools and set out as an itinerant cooper. He first found work at the house of a rich but illite-

THE BRIDGE.

rate old couple ; and as he sat mending the wash-tub, he heard the husband and wife arguing over a letter which they had received, and he learned that neither they nor any of their neighbors had been able to decipher it. He proposed to read the letter for them, and, after some demur at a mere cooper's pretensions to scholarship, they handed him the epistle, which was evidently designed by one who knew himself to be in communication with unlearned folk. The hieroglyphics depicted a goose beside a bed of lettuce ; an old man watching the goose ; a river, with a plum-tree on its bank ; and four turtles underneath the tree.

The cooper looked at the rebus, and immediately said, " This letter is from your adopted son." " How do you know that ? " inquired the old man. " Because," said the reader, " a goose is the symbol of humble acknowledgment of having been bought and reared, as one gets and feeds a goose on the products of one's garden. Then, you are expecting to hear from your son, since this old man looks toward the goose. You expect money from him, and may get it from the hands of Mr. Plum, who lives beside the river. That is shown by the plum-tree depicted on the bank of the stream. He has received sixteen dollars for you, and this is indicated by the legs of the four turtles, four times four."

The old man was delighted with this rendering of the letter, and hastened to ascertain whether it was wholly true. Having verified it in every particular, he returned with a present of a boar's head for the learned cooper. On receiving the pig's head, the young man at once saw that the gift was excellent of its kind, and extemporized the following verse:

> Eyes sunk in fat; nose broad and flat;
> Cheeks that a pudgy width of jaw display;
> Ears standing out, hairy and stout;
> I 'll take it home, and make a holiday.

This well-expressed appreciation of the good points of swine so delighted the old couple that they gave the cooper ten ounces of silver in payment for his services, and he went home with much satisfaction, and returned the borrowed tools to the real cooper's wife, to whom he told the story of his success, and how he attained it. The cooper's wife was also greatly pleased with the terse description of a fine boar's head, and when her husband came home she told him about it, and of the large pay which the verse had brought to its author. So the next day when the cooper went out to his usual work, he thought he would on the earliest opportunity try his luck with the stanza. His first employers chanced to be a prosperous couple, in which the wife was very

obese. She pothered around in the kitchen while the cooper was mending the tubs, and when he had finished his work, and when the householder was about to hand him his pay, he thought the time had come for the repetition of the stanza. So, looking at the wife, he began :

> " Eyes sunk in fat ; nose broad and flat ;
> Cheeks that a pudgy width of jaw display ;
> Ears standing out,——"

At this point the amazed and enraged husband caught up a cudgel and chased the poetical cooper off the premises, warning him never to reappear in that region again ; and so he had to go home without money or credit.

Moral : The learned may ply the tools of the tradesman, but the illiterate cannot safely apply the wit of the wise.

" My story is short," said a stout sugar-merchant, who had been nodding during the last recital ; " I see that I have wakened in time to ' reach the mill just as the grist is out,' as the saying goes. I will tell you of cronies who had

SIMILAR DISEASES.

Two old men, related by the marriage of their children, vied with each other in getting handsome furniture and apparel, and each reached the height

of pleasure when the other discovered that he had been outdone. It so happened that the two simultaneously bought new articles, the one a carved bedstead, the other a pair of silk trowsers; and as neither would appear to call the attention of the other to his latest acquisition, they stayed each at home, the first pretending illness so that when his friend should drop in he could be brought into the bedroom where the new bedstead was set up, the second bent upon wearing his trowsers without rumpling them till his friend should have dropped in and seen them on his legs. Each wondered why the other failed to make the usual casual visits, and each grew weary in waiting, the one on his bed, the other in his chair. The man with the new trowsers first yielded to the felt want of seeing his crony, and so went to inquire after him. The visitor was taken into the bedroom, and, as soon as he saw the bedstead, correctly diagnosticated the case; but he was determined that he would not give sign of having noticed the bedstead until after some compliment should have been paid to his trowsers. These were, unfortunately, quite out of the range of vision of the pseudo-invalid, who lay persistently on his back. After considerable skirmishing, in which each subtly endeavored, and failed, to draw the attention of the

CONSULTING A SOOTHSAYER.

other in the desired direction, the man on the bed inquired why his friend had not been to see him during all the last few days, while he had been so ill. "Oh," said the other, putting one foot upon the side of the bed, so as to bring his trowsers into view, leaning his elbow on his knee, and looking intensely melancholy—"Oh, I have had exactly the same ailment that you have!"

The next man in the circle of speakers took from his mouth a tobacco-pipe, with a stem a yard long, and a bowl of the size of a thimble, stuck it into the leg of his stocking, attached his tobacco-pouch to a button of his tunic, and said he would tell an anecdote which he had in former years heard from a friend of his who was a prosperous vermicelli-maker. He was now going to visit this friend's only son, whose history was rather interesting. He grew up in idleness, gambled, and never learned his father's trade. He was an exemplification of the proverb, "An indulgent mother rears bad children." The father died suddenly, and as the son was unable to conduct the business of vermicelli-making, he hired a master-workman. This master stole his goods, wasted his materials, and brought him near ruin. He was then deeply sorry he had not learned the business from his father. While he was worrying over the matter, and lamenting his inability to make vermicelli himself, he one night dreamed that his father came and taught him the proper mode of manufacture, the proportions of flour, water, and salt; the manner of mixing, and all other necessary details. The next morning he took sole charge of his business, succeeded perfectly in his craft, regained his father's position, and became an exemplary man.

Several others were at once reminded of dreams that had been remarkably prophetic or corrective, and were on the point of telling them, when Pearl begged to hear the vermicelli-maker's anecdote, and so directed general attention to

A DREAM INSPIRED.

A THIEF, who knew that an old woman had some silver coins, went into her room at night, when she was snoring steadily, to steal them. He explored every cranny, and poked in every pocket where he thought she might keep her money, but he could not find it. Wondering how she could be so clever as to think of a place of concealment that he could not discover, he thought of a ruse whereby he could make her reveal it. Putting his mouth close to her ear he whispered, "A thief has come to get your money," and then hid himself under her bed. She woke, soliloquized concerning the bad dream she had had, considered aloud whether she really heard a voice or dreamed a warning, then got up, turned up a tub, took out from beneath it a parcel, and counted her coins. Finding them all there, she berated herself for her folly in getting out of bed on account of her dream, and then went back to her slumbers. The wily thief, who had been watching her while she carried out the programme he had foreseen, waited only

until she snored again, and then took her money and departed.

"'An unlearned knave will often outwit a scholar,' says the proverb; and 'an old woman is easily deluded,'" remarked the narrator.

It was now Pearl's turn to amuse the company. The greater number were asleep, but a few still fanned themselves wearily, and Pearl's soft voice lulled all to repose, though she told the funniest story she could at the moment remember, one about

A FORTUITOUS APPLICATION.

An old woman, who lived all alone, heard it said that "The devils dance on one who knows no poetry"; so she decided to learn some. She looked out of her door, saw a man working in a field, took a cake with her, and went and asked him if he would teach her a verse if she would give him the cake. He readily consented, but when he had eaten the cake, he found that he could not think of any poetry, and he told her to follow him along the road, and he would teach her as they went. His plan was to give himself time to recollect a rhyme, but none would come to his mind, and when the old woman became impatient, he desperately resolved to compose a stanza. Here he was again at a loss, and as the old woman was tired and clamorous, he suggested that they sit down by a well

to rest, while he should teach her. Just as they seated themselves a frog put his head out of a chink in the well-curb, and afforded him a subject. He addressed it, saying,

> Now you stick out your head ;
> Now you draw your head in ;
> Now you sit by your hole,
> And you rub your bare chin.

The pupil thought this might be poetry, and with some difficulty she committed it to memory, and went back home.

She repeated it frequently during the evening, to make sure that she remembered it, and recited it to herself the last thing before she went to sleep. As it happened, two young robbers came that night, one intending to crawl in through a hole in her wall, and hand out to the other whatever portable articles he could lay hands on, while she slept. Just as he put his head into her room, she, fast asleep, but with her lesson still on her mind, recited, "Now you stick out your head"; and as he, surprised at being discovered in the darkness, drew back, she continued, "Now you draw your head in." This made him sure he had been seen by some one who was not afraid of him, and he got outside the hole, and told his fellow that there was somebody inside who could see in the

A BEGGAR AND HIS BLIND WIFE.

[illegible]

dark. He sat scratching his face, and doubting whether he had better make another entrance, when he heard the same voice saying :

"Now you sit by your hole,
And you rub your bare chin."

At this he signalled to his companion, and they both fled, convinced that the old woman could not only see in the dark, but also through a wall. When they had reached their covert they debated the matter, and agreed that the next day they would try to find out how the old woman had discovered them. They therefore disguised themselves as butchers, took their knives along, and went from house to house inquiring whether the householders wanted hogs slaughtered. When they approached the old woman's house, she was out by the roadside scraping a pan. She had been troubled by fleas during the night, and just at that moment she felt one bite. Running her hand into her gown, she put her finger upon two fleas at once, and exclaimed : "There they are, the very ones that were around last night!" The two men thought they were recognized, and hurried off, convinced that they might better keep away from a woman who had such remarkably good eyes.

When Pearl had finished her story, a little maid at the door beckoned to her, trying to keep herself meanwhile from

the sight of all the other travellers. Pearl soon went quietly out, found that the full moon had risen, and that the court was unoccupied by any one beside a young girl, who had been carrying water and feeding the animals about the inn during the previous evening. The girl drew Pearl into a corner of the court, remote from the sleeping-rooms, and said: "My name is Marigold, and I have neither father, nor mother, nor grandparents. I live here with this innkeeper, who is my distant relative, and who gives me little but blows for my hard work. I have been looking at you often since you came, and your sadness has made me pity you, while your dignity has made me revere you. I see that you are a student, and your soft voice shows that you are gentle. If you will let me flee away from here with you, I will serve you faithfully, and work for you diligently, and will be to you the most obedient of wives." Pearl sent the girl away to sleep, telling her that she would think what she could do for her.

The next morning Pearl sought the innkeeper, made with him a betrothal contract for Marigold, paid the sum necessary to bind the bargain, and agreed that, on her return from the capital, she would bring the wedding gifts, and take her bride away with her to her distant home. She then proceeded to the capital, where she joined Golden Branch, and learned that Grouse had gone home. The two young men had each passed the examinations with great credit, and had gained the expected honors. Grouse had at once hastened homeward, intending to claim his promised bride from her elder brother, his fellow-student; while Golden Branch had remained to see the sights of the great metropolis. A few days later, while Pearl and Golden Branch were seeking to procure, through the influence of high officers at the capital, the release of Mr. Summers, they heard from Grouse that he had, on reaching home, been informed of the

trouble in which his prospective father-in-law was plunged, and had at once entered into the case, and had secured a costless acquittal. Mr. Summers sent to Pearl the good news of his release, and added that, when he had asked his benefactor what guerdon he could give for the help received, Grouse had replied: "Your son has promised me his younger sister in marriage. Let me have her now, that I may take her home before the cares of office come upon me." Mr. Summers had consulted his wife, who said: "Our Pearl has evidently promised herself to this man. Go and tell him to wait until his classmate, who made him the promise, comes back from the capital; then we will confer about this important matter. It is proper that the one who made the betrothal should be present at the wedding. Make it plain to him that we will do nothing till our son returns."

Meanwhile Pearl, at the capital, in hourly conference with Golden Branch, grew ever more winsome in his eyes. At first, in the closer intercourse than they had ever before had, he only wondered at the feminine traits of his friend. But one day, in Pearl's absence, he entered her room, and found upon the floor a paper which she had inadvertently dropped, and he read upon it, in her handwriting, her poem of

THE STRAYED ARROW.

I shot an arrow in the air,
That it might secret message bear,
Of love from hidden maid;
Bitter indeed is woman's lot
When shackled where her heart is not:
Alas! My arrow strayed.

For Golden Branch my dart was meant;
A cruel fate the pledge missent,
And all my trust betrayed.
The high, still Heaven heard not my prayer;
Now earth holds nothing worth my care;
Alas! My arrow strayed.

Golden Branch pondered much on the meaning of this poem, and having reached a just conclusion, he next day took opportunities of looking steadily at Pearl, who invariably blushed under his gaze, and then, upon his accusation, owned her sex in words. Then he told her that it was he who had picked up her arrow, and who would claim a bride from her hands.

By this time the news of her father's release through the efforts of Grouse, had reached Pearl, and at the same moment word came from her mother that her mythical younger sister had an importunate suitor, who had been put off with the plea that it would be cruel to take the young girl from her home before she should have greeted her brother on his return from the capital. All things conspiring to hasten her homeward, Pearl set out on her journey, taking passage for a part of the way on a large boat where she passed several nights. One evening, sitting on deck with a few of her fellow-voyagers, one of them proposed the whiling away of the time with stories; and Pearl began with that of

JEAN VALJEAN IN CATHAY.

It was the birthday of an honored man, and his sons and servants were busy receiving messengers, who came with gifts and congratulations. A thief, who knew that among the presents there were articles of value, slipped in and secreted himself by lying face downward on a tie-beam in the roof of the great hall, where a banquet was to be served in the evening. From this quoin of vantage he overlooked the opening of parcels of silk, crape, jade, and jewels, and took

A WHEELED CHAIR.

note where they were deposited, intending to take them away after the guests should have departed and the family gone to sleep.

The master of the house arranged his birthday-gifts for the inspection of his relatives, and received the donors, in the evening, at a magnificent feast. Late at night, when the guests had all taken leave, and the servants had retired, the host lingered to put away some of the presents. As he leaned over a drawer, with his back toward the thief, the latter looked over the beam to take a final survey of the room before the lights should be put out, and his head cast a shadow on the floor. The host betrayed no sign of his having observed the moving shadow, but he soon after called a servant, and bade him bring the choicest viands and lay the table for a single guest. When this was done the host inquired whether all the inmates of the house had retired to rest, and on being informed that they had, he dismissed the servant for the night. Then turning toward the beam on which the thief lay, and making obeisance as to a noble guest, he said: "Will the gentleman who is on the roof-beam now come down and partake of refreshments?" As there was nothing else that he could reasonably do, the thief descended, and was led to the table by his host, who served him while he ate.

When he had finished his repast his host gave him a bag of silver coins, begged him to make good use of them, and dismissed him courteously from his door.

Tens of years passed, and brought the eightieth birthday of the host. His honors had increased, and his descendants were many. During the day costly gifts were sent to him by friends, who were all invited to sup with him that evening. His grandson received the presents at his door, and brought them to his apartment. Toward nightfall his grandson came to him with a priceless gem, and said that it had been brought by a stranger who would not tell his name, and who insisted upon seeing the master of the house. The stranger was admitted to the old man's room, where he expressed great joy in seeing his host alive and in health. The host did not recognize his guest, and, excusing himself by a plea of failing sight, inquired his name. The guest replied that he was a sincere friend, an honest man, and rich enough to bring many such gifts. The host responded that he could not accept gifts without knowing to whom he thus put himself under obligation ; and that unless he knew his name he could not show to him the same courtesy as to earlier comers by inviting him to sup with him that evening in his hall. Upon this the visitor suggested that his host might invite him by

saying, "Will the gentleman that was on the roof-beam partake of refreshments?" Then he told how he, the thief, had, under the influence of his host's gentleness, repented him of evil; had used in foreign trade the coins given to him; had prospered, and had practised truth and mercy. He stayed to banquet with the other guests, and among them all none were more happy than he and his benignant host.

The next speaker received undivided attention from Pearl, because she fancied that he looked a little as Golden Branch might do at the same age. His eyes were extremely and beautifully oblique; his forehead broad, and his nose well defined. As he permitted his moustache to grow, he was doubtless over thirty and a grandfather. He wore black satin shoes, yellow satin leggins, a green silk tunic, and a mauve crêpe sleeveless overcoat. His attire was modish, being in such fashion as has prevailed within two hundred years; and the button on his cap indicated that it was of recent manufacture, and that he was a man of rank. His unbrowned olive complexion indicated that he generally dwelt indoors, and his finger-nails, two inches long on the left hand, denoted his literary occupation. He said he regretted being unable to relate to his listeners anything more worthy of their attention than an anecdote about

A POLITE IDIOSYNCRASY

An old woman went to visit a married daughter who lived with her husband's mother. She found all the family absent, except her daughter, and her

daughter's mother-in-law. The mother was invited to stay and take supper with the other two women, and just after nightfall, the three sat down to take their evening meal together. They were barely seated at the table, when a gust of wind blew out the lamp and they were left in darkness. The mother-in-law said: "Sit still, both of you, and I will go and light the lamp." But while she was speaking the daughter took the lamp and went away to light it.

The mother, supposing that the mother-in-law had gone, and that her daughter sat beside her in the dark, hastened to say that, during meals, a guest should be served with the choicest of the viands. That side of the platter holding the tenderest portions of the meat, and that side of the dish on which lay the ripest of the fruit, should be turned toward the guest, so that the best might be taken, without an appearance of greediness. If the guest were one's own mother, then filial piety, as well as hospitality, required that these attentions should be scrupulously bestowed. She had scarcely given these instructions when the light reappeared, and she discovered that she had been talking, not to her daughter, but to her son-in-law's mother! Horrified by her mistake, she at once cast about in her own mind for a way of recovering the mother-in-law's respect, and then said:

"I have a curious peculiarity which has afflicted me all my life. If, at any time, the light suddenly goes out, and I am left in the dark, my mind wanders and I talk without purpose till the light reappears." "Ah," responded the mother-in-law, "I wholly understand a peculiarity of that sort, for I myself have a somewhat similar one. Whenever the lamp goes out in the evening, I at once become stone-deaf, and only recover my hearing after the lamp is again lighted!"

The captain of the boat said that before telling his story, which he had already thought of, he would recount a recent experience of one of his neighbors. It was that of a farmer who sold a superannuated olive tree to a villager, expecting that it would be cut down and used root and branch for fuel. Some months after the sale, the farmer found the stump and roots of the tree remaining on his land, and so went to the villager to inquire why he did not remove them, according to agreement. The purchaser said that he would give the remainder of the tree to the owner of the land, because he himself dared not dig out the roots. He had, with the help of several men, begun to do so, but no sooner had they begun to dig, than they came upon some mason-work, and concluded that there was an ancient grave under the roots. The first man who dug, was at once taken with a griping pain, so that he soon left his work. The others thought this pain might be caused by something he had eaten, and went on with their chopping. The man who took the place of the disabled digger was likewise soon attacked with his ailment, and went off with the same ache. The other men

were then afraid to further disturb the resting-place of the dead, and they all declined to dig longer. The work was therefore abandoned, and was not resumed.

The farmer, having formally received the remainder of the tree as a gift, went with spirit-money and incense, appealed to the spirit of the departed, and promised on his knees that if in digging he should injure the grave, he would make a new one, carefully collect the bones, and give them solemn interment. Supposing himself to have thus secured himself against any rash attack from the departed, he cautiously dug out the stump and roots, and found that the mason-work underneath, was the curb of an old well. This well, as he afterward learned from an aged relative, had been long ago filled up, and the olive tree had been planted within its curb.

The man who had reminded Pearl of Golden Branch, said he believed not only, what the old proverb declares, that "The imagination produces ghosts," but that the imagination also often creates the effects that are ascribed to departed spirits. He thought there had been such a case in his own family. His maternal grandmother had, in her early married life, had reason to doubt her husband's loyalty, and she had never during all the succeeding years forgotten or forgiven his sin against her. She had, however, never dared to revile him, because she knew his strength and his hot temper. When he died the children were all grown up, and both he and she were very old. As soon as he was dead, she went and expressed to the corpse her long-pent-up mind. She told it that for many long years she had swallowed her feelings, but that now she would take the opportunity of safely letting them out in words. She reviled her dead husband to her heart's content. But before she had departed from the room, she was seized with griping pain, and was obliged to take to her bed, where she rolled in anguish. Her children besought her to go and apologize to the corpse

so that she might not die and thus give them the trouble of a double funeral. She declared that she would die sooner than retract her words. Her sons got down on their knees and besought her to heed them, and they finally lifted and bore her to the side of the corpse to make her confession. She did it, with bad grace, but having done it, she immediately began to recover. For years afterward she at times scolded her sons for having carried her to confession, saying that it would have been better to have died rather than make apology to that "dog."

Several voices now demanded the captain's delayed story, and he told them of some

VERIFIED PREDICTIONS.

A STROLLING fortune-teller, who feigned blindness, came one morning to a house where there was only a woman at home, and sat down in the paved court, on the short end of the horizontal beam of a rice-pounder. The woman came and sat on the other end of the rice-pounder, and asked him about her future. He saw that she was stout, and he told her that she would soon have gold enough to fill all her dimples. She was pleased with the prognostication, and thought him wonderfully gifted because he, in spite of his blindness, perceived that she had dimples; so she asked him for a fuller augury. Perceiving that she was one who could be caught by guile, he told her that, although she would generally be prosperous, two

calamities were impending over her, one slight and near at hand, the other great and not very distant. Then, in response to her anxious appeal, he confessed that, if a peck of rice and an ounce of silver were given him, he could exercise an art whereby both calamities might be averted. She told him she could give him the peck of rice which her husband had bought the previous day, but she had not even the smallest piece of silver in the house. She begged him to exercise his powers, taking the rice only, but he replied that what he had mentioned was no more than was necessary, and he could not stay to be teased. As he got up to go, his end of the rice-pounder went up, while hers, of course, went down with a thud, and she was severely hurt. She at once said to herself: "Here is the first of the two misfortunes which he foretold. He is certainly a wizard, and I must get him to ward off the greater calamity which is coming." As soon as she could recover herself, she ran after him, and asked him whether her new coverlet, worth an ounce and a half of silver, would not compensate him for his exertion in her behalf. After a little demur, he consented to take the coverlet in lieu of the silver, and as he was going off with it and the peck of rice, he told her that during the day she would meet with trouble in which a car-

A BLIND FORTUNE-TELLER.

rying-pole would take part, and that during the coming night she would suffer much discomfort from a pillow. She replied that small troubles were easily borne, and that her mind was at ease, now that he was going to forestall the great calamity he had foreseen. The fortune-teller then went his way, and the woman returned to her housework.

When her husband, who was a porter, came home to get his noon-day meal, she told him that the rice was all gone, and that he must buy some more before supper-time. He inquired what had become of the peck he bought the day before, and she was obliged to own that she had given it to a fortune-teller. Her husband, who was not a believer in fortune-telling, took his carrying-pole and beat her soundly, she asserting, meanwhile: "The prediction is fulfilled; the prediction is fulfilled." That night proved to be a cool one, and, after the couple were in bed, the husband called for the coverlet. The wife had to confess that it had been bestowed upon the fortune-teller, and her tired and chilly husband beat her with the pillow, while she exclaimed: "What a marvellous foresight that blind man had! Now, all that he presaged has come to pass!"

Some comments were here made by several persons on the superstitions of women and the amount of money which they

wasted in trying to ascertain future events, and then a military man, who had been up to the capital for examination, and had received a high commendation for his proficiency in shooting with a bow from on horseback, was called on to contribute to the evening's amusement. He pondered a little, and then told the story of

THE THREE SWORN BROTHERS.

THREE orphan beggar-boys made a compact of eternal brotherhood, each averring that whenever prosperity came to him he would share his good fortune with the other two. They told their ages, put three handfuls of sand in one heap, and swore upon it, before high Heaven, that they three would form one family. Thereafter they slept together under one coverlet, boiled their potatoes in the same pot, and shared whatever luck came. As they grew up toward manhood, they talked of separating to seek their fortunes in different directions, always agreeing that he who first gained wealth or distinction would notify his brothers. After much discussion of the subject they parted. The eldest and the youngest continued begging. The second in age joined the army, went with it to subdue rebels on the frontier, got promotion for bravery, and finally became commandant. In the course of years his military exploits became

known throughout the empire. When the war ended, he was appointed governor of a province, and in this post he evinced such ability that his name was in everybody's mouth. His fame reached even to the ears of his adopted brothers. They conferred with each other, and decided that they would journey to his palace, and suggest the fulfilment of the old vow. On their reaching the gates of the gubernatorial residence, the elder of the two claimed, on the ground of his seniority, the right of making the first appeal to the quondam brother. A trial was going on and he went, in his rags, into the court, placed himself in front of the spectators, and gazed so intently at the governor that he soon gained his attention. The governor recognized him, but did not wish to publicly acknowledge the acquaintance, and so did not speak to him. Finding himself ignored, the beggar waited until there was a cessation of business, and then he pressed forward, exclaiming : "I am your elder brother. When we were boys you looked to me for advice ; and I often gave you half my dole." The governor, unwilling to have his early history set before his present associates, ordered the lictors to drive the beggar away. But, believing that he was not recognized, the poor man shouted : " Don't you remember that when we were beggars together we swore we would befriend

each other forever?" The governor commanded the lictors to beat the crazy vagabond, and they did it with a will. The more he was beaten, the more he tried to recall himself to the governor's mind, by narrating incidents in their early life, such as the robbing of hen-roosts, and the pilfering of orchards, and the more the governor frowned, the harder the lictors struck.

Meantime, the youngest brother, waiting outside the gates, thought that the two had, in the joy of reunion, forgotten him. When the eldest, bruised and draggled, was pushed through the outer gate, the youngest entreated him to tell what was the matter. "Come away," said the eldest; "do not speak a word, but come quickly. He is proud and dangerous, and our lives depend on our speedy escape." As they went he related all that had occurred. After hearing the tale, the youngest, in spite of dissuasion, left the eldest to go his way, and turned back to the palace. He made his way into the court-room, stood in the front rank of spectators, and when he perceived that he was recognized, he greeted the governor very deferentially, and said: "You do not remember me; but years ago we were fellow-soldiers. I was taken prisoner by the enemy in a foray, and by your personal prowess you set me free. I am poor, but I have come

a long way to pay my respects to you." The faces of all in the court expressed interest in the veteran, rescued from death by their governor, about whose courage in battle they had often heard. The governor greeted him kindly, ordered food and clothing for him, gave him an office, and ever after treated him as an old comrade in arms.

All in the group had now narrated some tale, except a pale lad, who sat near Pearl and who looked as if he might be an unsuccessful candidate for literary honors. He leaned on a bundle of books, and said he would relate the little fiction of

THE PEASANT-GIRL'S PRISONER.

A JAUNTY young student on his way to the examinations in his district-city met in a narrow path a young woman carrying wood. He said to himself, "She is a peasant, a woman, and young; those are three good reasons why she should yield the road to me." She said to herself: "He is empty-handed, and I am a burden-bearer; he must therefore make way for me to pass." So the two, each determined that the other should step aside, came face to face and halted. The stoppage soon became irksome, and the woman proposed to settle the question by a rhyming

bout, in which she would give the word for which he should furnish the rhyme. If he rhymed aptly, she would follow him as his servant; if he failed, he should follow her, and do her bidding. Never doubting that he could make a rhyme on any subject she could mention, he hastily assented; whereupon she threw off her splint hat, set down her wood, took her carrying-pole from her shoulder, placed it vertically before her, and awaited his response to her unspoken word. The student was perplexed, and vainly gazed at the pole.

"Come," said she, "my target is placed; why do you not shoot? Since you are a literary man, and I am only a poor peasant-girl, you should be able to compose a stanza on any subject I suggest."

The young fellow became more confused under her teasing, and finding himself unable to make a verse, told her to go home and he would follow as her servant. She made him carry the wood, and after they reached her cabin by the bank of a river she sent him to draw water, wash clothes, and do all sorts of menial work. Days passed, and still he could devise no appropriate couplet on the carrying-pole.

One day, when he was on the river bank washing vegetables, a boat went by full of merry young men returning homeward from the examinations. One of

PEASANT-GIRL AND STUDENT.

Digitized by Google

the passengers seeing and recognizing him, hailed him as his lost chum, and landed to inquire why he was there washing vegetables, when all at the examinations were wondering at his absence, and fearing that he had met with some grave accident. He thereupon told his story to his friend, and thus explained his sad plight.

His friend said: "Go and ask your peasant to allow me to try my skill on the pole."

"Oh, no," said the captive; "you will fail as I have done, and then this vixen will have two slaves instead of one."

"Never mind," responded his friend; "I will take the chance of freeing you or of becoming your companion in servitude. Go and bring the girl out for a parley."

The girl received the new-comer complacently, heard his proposition that he should in his friend's stead make a rhyme to her subject, with the condition that if he failed both should be her slaves, while if he succeeded she should free her present slave and become the rhymester's wife.

Again she placed her carrying-pole before her, and at once the student responded:

"Wood like this may be found on the hills everywhere;
In a flock of white cranes each is one of a pair."

She could not dispute the accuracy of the statement in the first line of the couplet, and perceiving in the second line the assertion that she was the mate of this bird of passage, she prepared to follow his fortunes.

The boat was sailing quietly before the wind, its two eyes directed well to its destination, and its sails of plaited straw spread to their full extent. The passengers dropped off to sleep, with their heads upon their snug bundles of clothing.

The next day Pearl arrived at the inn where Marigold awaited her, and delivered to the innkeeper the balance of the money, and the scores of pounds of pastry and meats, usually transferred to a parent when a bride is taken from his house. Marigold joyously accompanied Pearl to her native village, where Mrs. Summers took her into her care, and received from Pearl a full explanation of her own designs, mishaps, and desires. Pearl managed to give Marigold a peep, through a splint curtain, at Grouse, and then, appearing before her in feminine attire, asked her whether she would like to have Grouse or herself as a husband. Marigold wisely decided that she did not wish to marry a woman; but expressed great fear of going into an unknown family.

Mrs. Summers gave her much instruction concerning her duties as daughter-in-law; taught her how to dress her hair in a high coiffure, how to make obeisance to superiors, how to darn neatly, how to cut decorations for pastry from red paper, how to make flowers for the hair from floss silk, how to lament for the dead, how to congratulate the fortunate, and many other accomplishments.

Mrs. Summers determined that the friendless girl should have a bridal outfit that would win respect from the people among whom she would live, and while this was being made in the house, the mother, daughter, and adopted sister, in

the seclusion of the women's apartments, had many pleasant hours together. One evening, after planning the next day's sewing, Mrs. Summers told them the story of

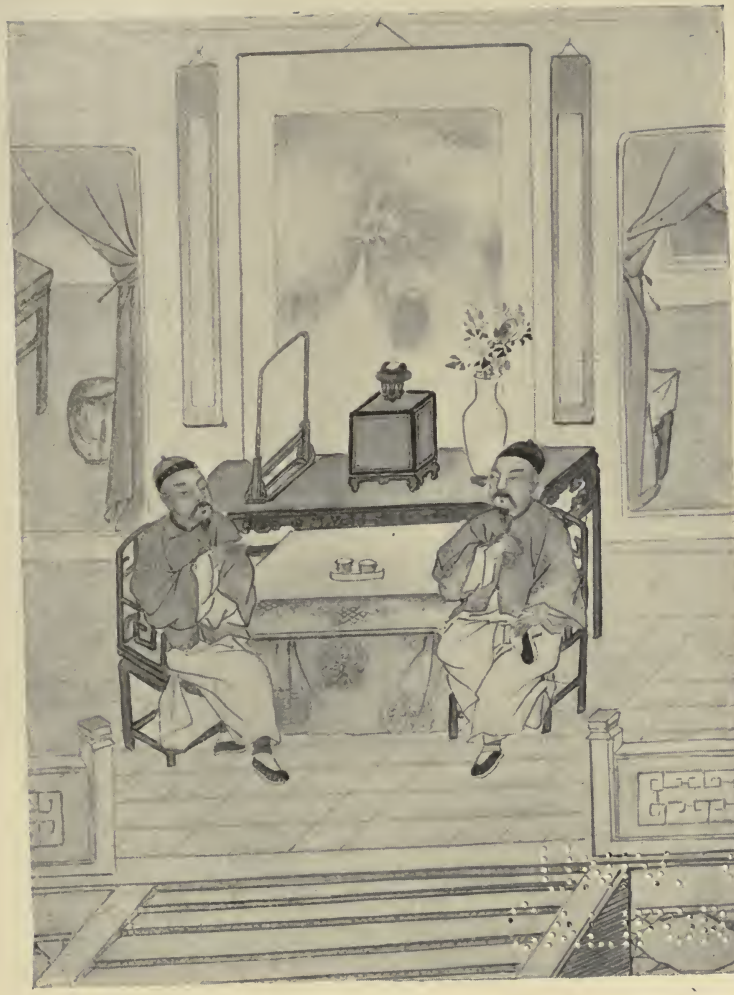
CRABS IN PLENTY.

A MAN married his daughter into a prosperous family about a league away. The girl had in her father's house been accustomed to use everything without stint and without reproach. The family into which she married was strict in its notions and exact in its ways. Though there were many dishes at each meal, all the leavings were put away, and were repeatedly brought on until they were eaten up, and no one was expected to eat anything except at meal-times and at the table.

Soon after the bride entered her father-in-law's household they had boiled salt crabs as a side-dish, and after the bride had set them upon the table many times, and there were but two or three left, she thought it not worth while to keep them longer, and so finished them herself and threw away the shells. At the next meal her father-in-law called for the crabs, and she was obliged to explain their absence. Her mother-in-law commented severely on the ill-breeding of one who ate privately, and said they should tell her parents that she had been badly brought up.

She at once secretly despatched a handmaid, who had accompanied her from her father's house, to tell her parents that they would soon hear complaint of her, and that they must apologize for not having taught her better manners, and must be careful, for her sake, not to anger the elders in her husband's family. Her parents having learned from the handmaid the cause of the bickering, sent her back quickly, so that her visit to them might not be known, and then bought a basketful of crabs, which they poured into a covered dry ditch near the front door. They told a servant to be on the watch, and when a visitor should come, whom they should address as Honored Relative, to begin to wash the door-steps, using plenty of water.

The father-in-law presently arrived, was greeted by the father with great affability, and invited to sit near the front door. The father kept up so lively a conversation on other topics that the father-in-law had no opportunity to introduce the subject that was uppermost in his mind. A servant was washing the steps, and some crabs began to disport themselves in the little pools, and a pig that was loitering about began to mouth the crabs. The father, engrossed in talking, appeared heedless of the danger to the crabs, until the father-in-law called his attention to them, saying that some one must have upset the market-



FATHER AND FATHER-IN-LAW.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of Toronto

basket, for the crabs were running about, and the pig was eating them, "Never mind," said the father, "a few crabs are of no consequence; let the pig eat them if he likes them." The father-in-law soon took his leave, went home, called his wife into their private room, and said: "Do not say anything more about the crabs. At her father's house they have crabs in such plenty that they let the pigs eat them, and the only reason she did not finish them sooner was because she thought they were not fit to eat. She has had such good fare in her father's house that she thinks our leavings are of no value."

Thereafter the family was less rigorous with the new daughter-in-law, and she had easier times.

Pearl quoted the proverb, "In buying an orchard one should consider the quality of the fruit as well as the extent of the ground," and remarked that, in marriage, people too often considered what amount of material wealth they should thereby possess, when they ought to be thinking what sort of living they would engage in. For her part, she did not highly esteem what could not be transmuted into happiness. Many a woman made the mistake of trying to please her husband by the practice of a

FALSE ECONOMY.

THERE were two women whose houses adjoined, and whose husbands were both in foreign parts. The one woman cooked substantial and sufficient

food, on which she lived healthfully, eating a good meal three times a day, and using the greater part of her time in earning something, whereby she made her house more comfortable. The other woman thought her neighbor extravagant in the use of fuel, food and light and considered herself extremely frugal, because she ate slight repasts, and, to save buying lampwick, pulled bits of cotton out of her coverlet, and twisted them up to burn in her oil.

When the two husbands returned together from abroad, the one woman was well and cheerful, received the traveller in a well-furnished home, and showed him a purse of money that she had saved out of what he had sent to her for current expenses. The other woman, having spent most of her time in warming up the slight repasts with which she stayed her stomach, had had no opportunity to do much work, and had grown sickly for lack of proper nourishment. She had laid up no money to show her husband on his return; and when he went to bed at night he inquired why the coverlet gave no warmth, and was told by his wife that, wishing to economize, she had pulled out all the cotton to make lamp-wicks!

Marigold said she hoped she should not err through lack of willingness to perform all her duties as daughter-in-law

A MAN RETURNS FROM ABROAD.

No Public
Access

and wife, but her relative, the innkeeper, had often told her that she was not thrifty. She remembered a story, which proved that brains were as necessary as willingness, in helping one's husband. It was about

THE THRIFTLESS WIFE.

Two pedlars, one of olives, the other of almanacs, had homes side by side. The olive pedlar had a tidy, careful wife, and, even when times were hard and trade dull, lived comfortably and got on in the world.

The vender of almanacs had a stupid, listless wife, to whom he often held up her industrious neighbor as an example worthy of her imitation. The slothful wife soon grew tired of having her neighbor's good traits and wise doings set forth for her edification, and finally came to hate to hear her name or see her face.

Things had gone on in this way for a long time, when a year of unusual hardship came to both families. All Chinese who expect to retain the esteem of their acquaintances, pay their debts at the end of the year. But this year the olive pedlar found his debts greater than his means of payment. After vainly seeking some honest way of meeting his obligations, he came on the last day of the year and told

his wife of his pecuniary embarrassments, saying that they must meet poverty and disgrace as best they could. The thrifty wife at once brought out a great store of pickled olives, telling her husband to go and sell them quickly and pay his debts. He asked where she got all these olives, and she replied that she had every day taken a few green olives from his baskets, before he started on his daily rounds, and had carefully preserved them for a time of need. As olives, like wine, improve by age, and as they bring their highest price at New Year, the pedlar was, by the sale of the pickled olives, enabled to pay all his debts, and to retain the capital and the credit wherewith to carry on his business during the following year.

The vender of almanacs had also lost money during the year, and on its last day found himself in debt; but his wife had no comfort to offer him, and he began the new year poorer and more wretched than ever. When he heard how his neighbor's wife had come to her husband's rescue with her pickled olives, he again reminded his own wife of her habitual uselessness, and lamented that he had not, like his neighbor, a real helpmate in his house. His wife thereupon silently determined to reform, and set herself to surprise her husband by her

economy and shrewdness. So when at the end of the next year he told her that he was in debt, and without means of payment, she went into her room and brought out several full bags, which she threw down at her husband's feet, telling him never again to call her a thriftless wife. In great astonishment he opened the bags, and poured out a heap of almanacs for the year that was ending. He asked where she got all these, and she said she had done as her neighbor did with the olives; she had taken a few almanacs daily from his pack, and secretly stored them up for him to sell at the end of the year.

Of course the books were then unsalable, and the poor pedlar lost all that he had paid for them; while his stupid wife concluded that, having imitated her lauded neighbor and got nothing but blame for it, she would take no further trouble to please her exacting husband.

"Do not trouble yourself too much about the future," said Pearl to Marigold; "Grouse has some fine traits, and when he sees your sincerity he will be devoted to you, as was a man, that I heard of, to a wife that was as conscientious as you will be."

"Tell me about her," said Marigold, and Pearl told the story of

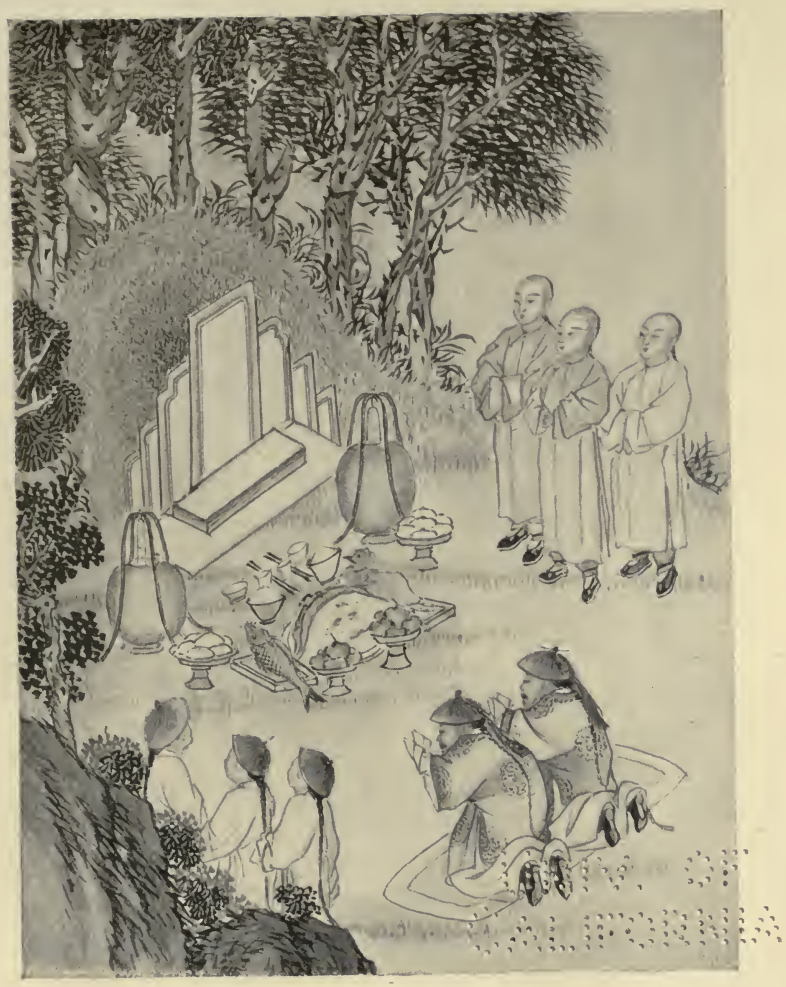
A WIFE WITH TWO HUSBANDS.

A POOR man, who had an old mother and a young wife, left them in his homestead and went to a foreign land, in the hope of bettering his fortune. He got lucrative employment, and every year he sent home as much as would comfortably support his wife and mother; but the agent to whom he entrusted the money for transmission kept it all, and forged a return letter telling him of its reception and of the welfare of his relatives. He invested wisely all his savings, beyond what he thought sufficient for the support of the two women, and by thrift and industry, in the course of a few years, amassed a competence.

Meanwhile, his mother and his wife never heard from him, and thought themselves forsaken by him. The wife earned what she could by sewing and weaving, and took care of the aged mother. But provisions grew dearer, the mother became helpless, and the wife ill. Then the old woman died, and the younger one had not money wherewith to buy a coffin. She therefore went to a go-between and told him to find for her an honest man who wanted a wife, and who would at once advance a betrothal present sufficient to meet the funeral expenses of her

mother-in-law, and who would wait a hundred days for the completion of the obsequies, before taking home his bride. This being done, the old mother was properly interred, the wife locked up the homestead, and was carried to the house of her new partner. She was a good wife to him, and he honored and loved her. Several years passed, and the first husband returned, with his fortune, to his native village. He had, as he thought, recently heard from his home, and went to his door expecting to be greeted by his mother and wife. The door was locked, the house dilapidated, and the yard weed-grown. He inquired of a neighbor what had happened, and as soon as he was recognized he was fiercely upbraided for having abandoned his family. He told his story, and heard for the first time of his mother's death, and of his wife's marriage. He had always been fond of his wife, and he was made more fond by her faithfulness to his mother through poverty and apparent desertion. He sought her in her new abode, told her how he had been deceived, and begged her to go home with him. She said her new husband was kind to her, and that she could not leave him to sorrow. The first husband then conferred with the second, declared his wrongs, and offered half his fortune for

the restoration of his wife. The second affirmed that he had not sought the wife, but had taken her at her own request and in legal form; that she was rightly his, that he preferred her to a fortune, and would never give her up. In the end the two claimants of the wife went before a magistrate, and stated each his case. The wife was summoned, with other witnesses, and due investigation made. After all the facts had been set forth, to the honor of all the three principal actors, the magistrate decided that as each of the two men had just reasons for considering the woman his own, and as neither had knowingly violated any law, the decision of the case should be left to the wife, who might freely take her choice, between the two contestants for her. The wife responded that both men were upright and affectionate, and had equally strong claims upon her regard; were she to choose one she should wrong and grieve the other. They each deserved a good wife, and as she could not be a wife of both, she would leave both wifeless. She, who was the cause of their troubles would die by her own hand. The magistrate commended her judgment, ordered her to be shut up fasting in a certain cell overnight, and told the two claimants to return the next morning and see whether she should have changed her mind. When the two came into



WORSHIPPING AT THE GRAVE OF AN ANCESTOR.

THE GIFT
OF

court next day, a constable was sent to bring the woman from her cell, to give her final decision before the magistrate. The constable soon came back alone, pale and shivering, and reported that she hung stark and cold from a beam in the cell where she had been put for the night. The two husbands went under conduct of the constable, peered in, recognized her figure and garments, and were brought back to be interrogated by the magistrate concerning their respective wishes. They were informed that the one who wanted her could now have her, by paying to the other a sum sufficient to meet the expense of getting a new wife. The first husband thereupon fell on his knees and besought the privilege of taking away the corpse. The second preferred no request, and when the magistrate inquired whether he also wished to take part in the funeral rites, he replied that his contest had been for a living, not for a dead woman.

The magistrate, on dismissing the woman from the court on the previous day, had secretly sent her to his wife's apartments. There she was dressed in borrowed garments, and concealed carefully, while her own clothing was used in making an effigy which was hung upon a beam in the cell she was supposed to occupy. The constable saw the effigy, and in un-

feigned terror reported the suicide of the wife to the two husbands. The wife was placed where she heard her first husband's plea for her corpse, and she then made up her mind that she ought not to die. She accompanied the husband, leal in death as well as in life, to the old homestead, where she and he with their children lived happily for many decades, and worshipped at the graves of his ancestors.

The days sped quickly, and the time appointed for Marigold's marriage to Grouse drew nigh. Pearl, in her student's dress, continued to frequent her grandmother's house, and while there she had met Grouse and his go-between, and had settled all the preliminaries of the wedding. Grouse took home the bride with all the elaborate ceremonies usual at the first marriage of a literary man, and Marigold, who was seen by his classmates after the marriage supper, was pronounced the prettiest bride of the season.

Pearl continued to wear her student's dress, until Golden Branch returned from the capital and asked in due form for her hand, and then her new costumes formed her wedding outfit.

She travels with her husband when his official duties take him to distant cities. Her boys give promise of taking their literary degrees at a remarkably early age.

FINIS.

FAIRY TALES OF THE NATIONS

ENGLISH FAIRY TALES.

Collected by Joseph Jacobs, President of the English Folk-Lore Society. Pictured by John D. Batten. 12mo . . $1 75

"The stories are all either new or told in new form, and the book as a mechanical accomplishment is one of the most admirable things that has come from the press for many months."—*Detroit Free Press.*

CELTIC FAIRY TALES.

Collected by Joseph Jacobs. Pictured by John D. Batten. Uniform with above. 12mo $1 75

"Mr. Jacobs relates their marvels racily and in a way to hold the ear of either a child or a student of this fascinating branch of folk-lore."—*Christian Union.*

INDIAN FAIRY TALES.

Collected and edited by Joseph Jacobs, pictured by John D. Batten. 12mo $1 75

"His works are always entertaining and valuable, and his series of fairy books grows in interest with each new volume."—*New York Post.*

CHINESE NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS.

Forty Tales Related by Almond-Eyed Folk. Actors in the Romance of "The Strayed Arrow." By Adele M. Fielde. With illustrations by Chinese artists. Uniform with above volumes. 12mo $1 75

(Ready May, 1893.)

THE LIGHT PRINCESS, and other Fairy Tales.

By George MacDonald. Illustrated by Maud Humphrey. 12mo $1 75

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK
27 WEST 23D STREET

LONDON
24 BEDFORD ST., STRAND

RETURN TO the circulation desk of any
University of California Library
or to the
NORTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
Bldg. 400, Richmond Field Station
University of California
Richmond, CA 94804-4698

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS
2-month loans may be renewed by calling
(510) 642-6753
1-year loans may be recharged by bringing books
to NRLF
Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days
prior to due date

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

NOV 7 1996

JUL 1 7 1998

10/5/97

LEY

20,000 (4/94)

YC 27599

GENERAL LIBRARY - U.C. BERKELEY

B000938358